

AN
ADDRESS
TO
PROTESTANTS
UPON THE
Present Conjunction.

In II. Parts.

By a Protestant, William Penn.

Printed in the Year 1679.

ADDRESSES

PROTESTANTS

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TO THE
READER.

Sober Reader,

THE *Present Affairs* of this Kingdom are upon a *Strong and Unusual Motion*: to what *Point* they tend, or where they will *Center*, must rest with God, that only is *Omniſcient*. This makes it *Hard* either to *Write* or *Speak*: perhaps I ſhall be able to do neither without *Diſadvantage* to my ſelf; but I will do it with as little to the *Matter* as I can. And truly, I ſay it with ſome *Comfort*, the *Clearing* of an *Oppreſſed*, yet *Peaceable Conſcience* prevails more with me, than the *Safety of Silence*. And yet I have no *Reason* to think, there is an *Hazard* in the *Caſe*, when the *Publick Fa^t* ſecures the *Undertaking*; and that I am ſure, I propoſe nothing for my *End* beſides the *Glory of Almighty God*, the *Good of Mankind*, and more eſpecially the *Peace and Happineſs* of my own

Country. In which if I succeed not, it is no more, than what hath befallen the *Endeavours* of *Most Excellent Persons*: we must not measure our Duty by *Success*. Being therefore not discouraged in my self, and having a *strong Hope*, that Almighty God will favour this *Honest Address* with his Blessing. I beseech thee, *Reader*, peruse it with a *Serious* and *Composed Mind*, and with that *Meekness* and *Charity*, which becomes a *True Protestant* and a *Christian* to have.

Thine in Sincerity

for the Publick Good

W. Penn.

THE

AN
ADDRESS
TO
PROTESTANTS
UPON THE
Present Conjunction.

My Friends and Country-men,

IF ye believe, that there is a God, that he is *Holy*,
Just and *Good*, that he Made us, that we Owe our
selves to him, & that he is not Careless of us, but
the Constant Observer of our *Thoughts* and *Actions*,
and that as he is the Rewarder of them that *fear*, *love*
and *obey* him, so he is the severe Punisher of all such
as transgress his Law, and break his Righteous Com-
mandments: if (I say) ye believe these things, and
not only, that there is a Final Day of *Reckoning*, but
that God even in this World recompences his *Judg-*
ments upon the Wicked, and visit *Nations* with his hot
Displeasure because of their *Impiety* (which hath been
the Experience and Confession of all Ages) then it
belongs

belongs to us of these *Kingdoms* to reflect upon our selves, and to take a true *View* of our *Actions*, since *Divine Vengeance is at the door*. And for the Lords sake, let us have a Care in the doing of it, since God will not be mocked; and that our *miscarriage* in such an Inquiry will be as only our own *Infelicity*, so of infinite Moment to us. I must needs be Plain and Earnest here, for if we miscarry in the *Search*, we shall certainly miscarry in the *Cure*. *Sin* gives the deadliest of all Wounds to Mankind; I grieve to say it, but 'tis too true; there is no Wound so slightly healed: we rather seek our *Ease*, than our *Security*, like those Fools that love the *pleasantest*, not the *safest Potions*. It is ill at all times, to flatter a Man's *Self*; but it is most Fatal about *Repentance*: Something men would keep, something men would hide; and yet they have to do with that *Searcher of Hearts*, from whom its impossible they should hide any thing. This *Folly* increases our Account, endangers our *Cure* and makes our Condition Desperate, if not *Irrecoverable*.

O England, my Native Country, Come to Judgment, bring thy deeds to the true Light; see whether they are wrought in God or no. Put not off thy self with Hay, Straw and Stubble; for they will burn, and the Fire is at the Door, that will consume them: he is coming, whose Reward is with him, and will give every one according to his Works. Let us therefore examine our selves. Try our selves. Prove our own selves, whether Christ be in us or not; if his Spirit, his Nature, his Meekness, his Patience, his great Self-denial dwell in us; if not, we are yet Reprobates, yet under the Reproofs of the Almighty, the Charge and Guilt of Sin;

Sins, and his Witnesses in our own Consciences send up Evidence to Heaven against us every day: this I justly fear and take to be our Case. Let us therefore strictly look into our Conversations, and with an impartial Eye take a view of those Sins, that most severely Cry to the *Great Judge* against us. And they appear to me to be of Two Sorts; the one relating more particularly to the *State*, the other to the *Church* (if I may without Offence use that *Distinction*) for my Witness is with God, I intend not Provocation, but *Edification*.

Those Impieties that relate more particularly to the *State* to correct, are *Drunkenness*, *Whoredoms* and *Fornication*; *Excess*, in *Apparel*, in *Furniture* and in *Living*; *Profuse Gaming*; and finally *Oaths*, *Prophaneness* and *Blasphemy*.

Drunkenness, or Excess in Drinking, is not only a *Violation* of *God's Law*, but of our own *Natures*; it doth of all other Sins rob us of our *Reason*, deface the Impressions of *Vertue*, and extinguish the Remembrance of *God's Mercies* and our own *Duty*: It fits men for that, which they would abhor, if *Sober*. The *Incest*, *Murder*, *Robberies*, *Fires* and other *Villanies*, that have been done in *Drunken Fits*, make *Drunkenness* a Common Enemy to *Humane Society*. It renders men unfit for *Trust* or *Business*, it tells *Secrets*, betrays *Friendships*, disposes men to be *Trapped* and *Cheated*: Finally, it spoils *Health*, weakens *Humane Race*, and above all *provokes the Just God to Anger*, who cried thus of Old; *Wo to the Drunkards of Ephriam! the Drunkards* Isa. 28. 1, 3, 7.

of Ephraim shall be trodden under feet: they have erred through Wine, and through Strong Drink are out of the way; the Priest and the Prophet have erred through Strong Drink, they erred in Vision, they stamble in Judgment. Again, we unto them that are mighty to drink Wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink. we unto them that rise early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink; that continue until night, till Wine inflame them: and the Harp, and the Viol, the Tabret and the Pipe, and Wine are in their Feasts; but they regard not the Work of the Lord, neither consider the Operations of his hands. Therefore Hell hath enlarged her self, and opened her Mouth without measure, and their Glory and their Multitude, and their Pomp, and he that rejoices, shall descend into it.

Yet you will bear me witness, I do not *wrong* the present *Humor* of too many in this *Nation*, and those not of the lowest *Quality*, in saying, that it is too often the *beginning* and *top* of their *Friendship*: it is their *Common* *Diversion* and *Entertainment*; I might safely say, the *Poor* of *England* could be maintain'd by their *Excess*. Oh! hath the God of Heaven given men *Plenty* for such *Ends*? or will this kind of *Improvement* of their *Worldly Talent* give them *Peace* in the *Day of Judgment*? But that men should do all this without *shame*, nay, glory in it too, is greatly to be lamented, for 'tis not only *Appetite*, but the *Vanity* of *Conquest* excites not a few, as if it were matter of *Triumph* to Drown a Man's *Reason*, and to Degrade him to the *Beast*. Let us hear upon the whole matter the Sentence pronounced against them by the Wise Man, *Who*
Prov. 23. ver. 29, 30, 31, 32, 33.
hath

who hath Wo? who hath Sorrow? who hath Contentions? who hath Babling? who hath Wounds without Cause? who hath Redness of Eyes? They that tarry long at the WINE, they that go to seek mixt WINE. Look not thou upon the WINE, when it is Red, when it giveth his Colour in the Cup, when it moveth it self aright; at the last it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder. Thine Eyes shall behold strange Women, and thine Heart shall utter perverse things.

Here is much of the Mischief of Drunkenness in a little, & of the Excess and Wantonness of the Drunkard; But did ever any Age come near ours, when the very Tasting of the several sorts of wine (that are liberally drunk of at many Tables) is enough to distemper a Temperate Head? But that such Excesses should be, while the Backs of the Poor are almost Naked, and their Bellies miserably pinch'd with Hunger, is almost as great a shame to our pretences to Policy, as those (I fear) we Unwarrantably make to Religion. Oh! that we were fit to receive that Heavenly Exhortation of the Apostle, *Be not Drunk with Wine, wherein is Excess; but be filled with the Spirit*, (but God knows, this is mockt at! He goes on) *speaking to your selves* (not in Lampoons nor Obscene Songs, that excite Lusts, but) *in Psalms, and Hymns and Spiritual Songs, singing and making Melody in your Heart to the Lord, giving Thanks always for all things unto God and the Father, in the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The Next crying Sin is that of Whoredom and Fornication. From one of the Cleanest People under Heaven (I fear) we are become one of the most Inchaste (at least in &

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about

about London.) The French have sufficiently revenged themselves upon us by the *loose Manners* they have brought amongst us, of which this makes a great part: but I must needs say to their Credit, they keep their Wits in their *Debaucheries*, whilst we by *Over-doing* them in the Imitation of them lose both. What is become of that Antient Education of the Kingdom? our *Integrity*, *Gravity* and *Manhood*, which gave our Men so great Reputation in the World, is it not turn'd into *Swearing* and *Drinking*, *Fiddling* and *Dancing*, *fine Cloaths*, a *Duel* and a *wench*? their *Prophane*ness is their Wit, and their *base Crafts* must be called *Policy*. But where is that *Retired Breeding*, which made our Women as famous for their *Virtue*, as they were always held for their *Beauty*? alas! there hath been a sort of Industry used to subdue their *Native Modesty*, as if it were an *Indecent thing* to have it, and *Arts* practised to make them *Hardy* against their own *Blushes*, and master their shy and bashful Disposition (so peculiar to Chastity) into an *Unconcerned Confidence*: as if it were their Perfection to be *Insensible* of any ill, and to be *Tame* at all things. Strange! that *Sobriety* should be turn'd into *Levity*! and *Lust* called *Love*! and *Wantonness*, *good Humor*! to introduce which, nothing hath been so Pernicious, as the Use of *Plays* and *Romances* amongst us, where the warm and uneven *Passions* of our *Youth*, easily transported beyond the Government of their *Reason*, have been mov'd and excited to try that in Earnest, which they have seen in Jest.

But which way soever this Ungodly *Latitude* came in, certain it is, that what *forty years* ago was not fit to

to be named, is now practis'd without any Scruple, *Marriage*, which is *Gods Ordinance*, & as lovely to *Chaste Minds* as lawful, is now grown a *Dull Thing*, *old* and *Clownish*, kept up only for *Issue*, and that because the *Law* will have it so; A sort of *Formality* not yet thought fit to be abrogated, so that, what was once ordained of God for many other *Helps* and *Comforts*, and permitted by the Holy *Apoſtle* to prevent Lust (*Better Marry than Burn*) is by the *Extravagant Growth* of *Vice* turn'd to quite the *Contrary*. For some Men & (which is worse) some Women too, have said, *They could love their Wives and Husbands, if they were not their Wives and Husbands*; (tho that be the true Reason, why they ought to love them) It is in short to say: If they were in that Condition, in which they ought not to love them, they could love them; but being in that Condition, in which they ought to love them, they declare, they cannot love them: Yet Alas! *Christians*, & Children of God: what a shame is this, & Scandal to Society! But for God's sake, let this *Impiety* be laid to Heart! let not the *Marriage Bed* be so horribly defiled! let not our *Virgins* be so basely abused! It destroys *Honour*, *Fortitude*, *Health*; it pollutes *Houses*, and makes the *Issue* of the *Nation* *Spurious*: It occasions great *Unkindnesses*, *Rents*, *Confusions* and *Divisions* in *Families*, between *Husband* and *Wife*, *Parents* and *Children*, *Masters*, *Missresses* and *Servants*: it spots their *Name*; but above all, the poor *Children* are unhappy, that wear an *Ignominy* they never deserved. In fine, it teaches *Young-men* to slight *Marriage*, and *Married Men* to break their *Contracts*: If *Religion* were not interested in it, yet the *Breed* of the *Nation* is Visibly

injur'd by it; Good Horse-men are more Nice and Careful in their *Studs*, the Policy of the Nation is concern'd in preventing the Mischiefs, that follow such *Licentious Practices*. But if we will consider the share that *Religion* has, both in *Virginity* and in *Marriage*, we shall find many severe Sentences past upon the Violators of them. *Thou shalt not commit Adultery,*

saith God; *The Adulterer shall be put to Death,* saith the same God: *I will be a*

swift Witness against the Adulterer, saith

the Lord. *Know ye not, that the Un-*

righteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of

God? let not deceived, neither For-

nicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate

persons, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind. And

the Holy Apostle gives the Reason, *The Body is not*

for Fornication, but for the Lord, and the Lord for the

Body: Know ye not (saith he) that your Bodies are the

Members of Christ? Shall I then take the Members of

Christ, and make them the Members of an Harlot? God

forbid! Flee Fornication: he that committeth Fornicati-

on, sinneth against his own Body. what! (saith he) know

ye not, your Body is the Temple of the Holy Ghost, which is

in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? for

ye are bought with a Price; therefore glorify God in your

Body and in your Spirit, which are God's. If any Man

defile the Temple of God, him shall God destroy. O can

men profess to believe these things, and lead that

wretched Life they live! But yet again hear this

Man of God: But Fornication and all Uncleanness or

Corruptions let it not be once named amongst you, as be-

cometh Saints; neither Filthiness, nor foolish Talking

nor

nor Feasting, which are not Convenient; but rather giving of Thanks. For thus ye know, that no Whoremonger, nor Unclean person, nor Covetous man, who is an Idolater, hath any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God. Let no man deceive you with vain Words; for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the Children of Disobedience: Be not ye therefore partakers with them, and have no fellowship with the Unfruitful works of Darkness; but rather reprove them: See then, that ye walk Circumspectly, not as Fools, but as Wise, redeeming the Time, because the Dayes are Evil. (Ephes. 5, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 15, 16.) I shall Conclude with these two Passages: Marriage is Honorable in all, and the Bed Undeiled; but Whoremongers and Adulterers God will judge! The other is this: Heb. 13, 4: But the Fearful and Unbelieving, and the Rev. 21, 8: Abominable and Murtherers, and Whoremongers, and Sorcerers, and Idolaters, and all Lyars shall have their part in the Lake, which burneth with Fire and Brimstone, which is the Second Death: This alone ought to deter all People, who have any respect for Holy Scripture, and do believe the Mind of God to be declared therein. Let then both Cities, Courts, Houses and Streets be swept of such Iniquity; let the Law have its course, let not God be provoked to destroy us: and let all such turn to God by unfeigned Repentance; that Sobriety, Chastity and Vertuous Conversation may return again among us: so shall we escape the Wrath, that for this with other Enormities is ready to break out against us.

The Third Crying Sin of this Land is its Great Excess, and that in several Kinds; In Apparel, in Furniture,

ture, in Feasting. An *Excess* is the *Mis-using* of any thing, by not observing a Moderation: that which is lawful in it self, may be *Abused* in the Use of it. What is more Allowable, yet what is more Abused than *Cloths* and *Victuals*? The End of *Apparel* is to cover Nakedness, keep People Warm, Distinguish Sexes; but the End is perverted: 'tis used more for *Ornament*, for *Pride*, for *Lust*; to beget *Esteem* and to draw *Honour* to the Person that wears it: A Mean, an Effeminate, a Wretched way to *Honour*; yet such was the *Folly* of the *Age*, that few things are yet more Reverenced: it opens Doors, gets Accels, obtains Dispatches, carries away the *Cap* and the *Knee* from most other Pretences. The Truth is, this *Vanity* abuses the Reason of *Just Respect*: for True Quality, if plain, is not to be known among *Fine Cloths*. But it does not only Confound all *Reasonable Distinction*, and those *Civil Degrees* that are among People; but it begets *Pride*: they think themselves *some Body*, if they are *Fine*; Plain Cloths must give them the *Way* and the *Wall*, and keep its *Distance* too. It introduces *Effeminacy*, and excites to Wantonness: it provokes to *Prodigality*; and leads People to Idleness. But there is a sort of *Madness* in it too: for 'tis not so much the *Apparel*, as the *Trimming*; not the *Cloths*, but the *Cut*, the *Modè*, the *Figure*: and as often as this changes, *Cloths* grow *Useless*, that are not half worn out. This is an Iniquity against the Good of the *Government*, as well as against God; and there is so strong a Temptation in it, that not a Few turn Naught to be *Fine*, as well as the *Fine* turn *Naught*. In short, there is no Good, Prudence or Conveniency in this *Excess*; the

the *Law of God* and of the *Land* is against it: The third Chapter of *Isaiah* is almost intirely employed against it, in which God does not only rebuke *Isa. 3.* the *Haughty Looks*, the *Wanton Eyes* and *Enticing Mean and Behaviour* of the Women of those Times; but declares his Resolution to "Take away the Bravery
"of their Ornaments, Chains, Bracelets, Rings, Jew-
"els and Changeable Suits of Apparel, and that their
"Perfume should be turned into a Stink, and instead
"of a Girdle there should be a Rent, and instead of
"Well-set Hair Baldness, and instead of a Stomacher
"a Girding of Sack-cloth, and Burning instead of
"Beauty. Thy Men (*said God*) shall fall by the Sword,
"and thy Mighty in the War: and her Gates shall
"lament and mourn; she being desolate, shall sit upon
"the Ground.

This was also the Sin of *Tyrus*, as ye may see *Ezek. 27.* For *Pomp* and *Pride* she excelled in those days: she boasted in her *Splendor* and *sumptuous Living*; her Buildings were *Lofty*, her Furniture *Stately*, her Apparel *Costly*: but her End was *Terrible*, and her Destruction very Great. And God expressly threatens by his Prophet *Zephaniah*; *I will punish the Princes and the Kings Children, and all that are clothed with strange Apparel.* What is this *strange Apparel*? is it *New Fashions*? then we are guilty with a witness. Or is it the *Fashions of strange Countries*? it is still our own Case: We have been more Careful to receive the Law from *France* for our Clothes, than from *Christ* for our Conversation; and so Prevalent is the *Humor* of that Country with us, and Powerful the *Ascendant* it hath over us, that we seem to be *French-Men*, only we live in *England*.
But

But in this, as also in all other things the *Christian Religion* excels, and that for the Good of *Civil Society*: It reproves this *Excess*, limits the *Vain Mind* of Man, and teaches that *decent Plainness*, which becomes the *Providence* and *Gravity* of *Civil Government*. Hear the *Language* of the holy *Apostles*, in whose *Doctrine*

we all pretend to believe, *I will therefore*
1 Tim. 2. (saith St. Paul) *that Women adorn themselves*
2, 10. in *Modest Apparel*, with *Shamefacedness* and

Sobriety, not with *Broidered Hair*, or *Gold*, or *Pearls*, or
Costly Array; but (which becometh *Women* professing
Godliness) with *Good Works*. The same Do-

1 Pet. 3. *ctrine* is repeated by the *Apostle Peter*, who
3, 4. 5. speaking to the *Christian Women*, to whom

he wrote; *Let not your Adorning be in that Outward A-*
dorning of Plating the Hair, and of *wearing of Gold*, or
of putting on of Apparel; but let it be the *bidden Man* of
the heart in that which is not *corruptible*, even the *Orna-*
ment of a Meek and Quiet Spirit, which is in the *sight* of
God of great *Price*: For after this manner in the *Old*
Time the holy *Women* also, who trusted in *God*, adorned them-
selves. Would to *God*! I could say for the *Women* of
our Age, that they trusted in *God* too, and adorned
 themselves with no other *Ornaments*, than what a-
 greed with the *Modest* and *Humble Plainness* of these
Christian Times.

But the *Law* of the *Land* as well as the *Christian*
Law reproves this *Excess*, they only want to be re-
 freshed and enforced by the *Care* of our *Superiors*; were
 they *Strictly* put in *Execution*, it would not only prevent
 much *Mischief*, and encrease the *Wealth* of the *King-*
dom, but make *Private Men* in a little time thank the

Just

Just Severity of the Government. For it will help to keep them within *Compass*, to preserve (which is one way to *encrease*) their *Estate*, to enlarge their *Trade*, provide better for their Children, and open their hands more *Liberally* to the *Poor*: And this I am sure, God requires at our Hands.

What I have said against *Excess* in *Apparel*, is also applicable to *Excess* in *Furniture*: For as *Finery* is more valued than *Clothes*, so is the *Furniture*, than the *House*. It is a most *Inexcusable Superfluity*, to bestow an *Estate* to line *Walls*, dress *Cabinets*, embroider *Beds*, with an Hundred other *unprofitable Pieces of State*: such as *Massy Plate*, *Rich Chinny*, *Costly Pictures* and *Painted Windows* of no use in the Earth, only for *Show* and *Sight*: the *Interest* of which Money so ill employed, might probably *Maintain* the *Poor* of a Numerous *Parish*. "O Lord God! hast thou given us *Plenty*, and should we see others *Want*? should we clothe our *Dead walls*, and let thy *Poor* go *Naked*? "Can we feed our *Eyes* with these *Objects*, and not feed the *Hungry* with *Bread*? and spend our *Money* upon *Lifeless Pictures*, but shut up our *Bowels* to thy *Living Image*, the *Poor* and *Nedy* of the *Earth*? "Rebuke this *Evil Mind*, and bring down the *Pride* of *all Flesh*, O Lord! for thy *Name's sake*.

The *Last Excess* is that of *Feasting* and *Voluptuousness*, *Immoderate Eating* and *Drinking*, with that strain of *Mirth* and *Jollity*, which is the *Mode* and *Practice* of the *Times*. *Dives* is almost got into every *Family*, especially those of *Note* and *Estate*: it is *Want* of *Wealth*, and not *Will*, that the *Greatest Part*

of the Nation is not guilty; they mostly sin to their Ability: that is sad! But the Sin of *Voluptuousness* is swell'd to that Bulk, that there are more *Receipts* for Eating and Drinking, than there are *Precepts* of Life in the Old and New Law: the Book of Cookery is grown as big as the *Bible*, and I fear, read, to be sure, *practis'd* oftner. In this Art the *Lust* of the *Flesh* is deeply concern'd; there is not so much Care of the Stomach as of the *Palate*, of Health as *Pleasure*: 'tis the *Taste*, the *Gust*, the *Relish*, that makes the *Victuals* go down; therefore the *Sawce* is *preferred* before the *Meat*. *Twelve-penny* worth of *Flesh* with *Five Shillings* of Cookery may happen to make a *Fashionable Dish*; plain *Reef*, *Mutton*, or any other thing is become *Dull Food*: But by that time its *Natural Relish* is lost in the Crowd of the Cook's *Ingredients*, and the *Meat* sufficiently disguised to the Eaters; it passes under a *French Name* for a very *Good Dish*. But there is one thing in this Impiety more than ordinarily *Condemnable*; it destroys *Hospitality* and wrongs the *Poor*: For that *Expence*, which is now flung away upon a *Vicious Palate*, upon a *French Soup* or *Sawce*, in former Times afforded several *Dishes* of *substantial Victuals*; which did not only feed *Strangers* or *Neighbours*, but the *Poor*, who have now little more than (what the *Dogs* had then) *Empty Dishes* to lick. This is *Abusing* the *Providence* of God, *Tyrannizing* over the *Creatures* made for man's Use, and *sacrificing* their *Poor Lives* not to our *Lives*, but to our *Lusts*: 'Tis against such as these, that the *Creation* groans; and from whose *Intemperance* it cries to be delivered.

God in all Ages hath had a Controversie with Voluptuous Men, and the Testimonies of sacred Records are Strong and Numerous against them: I will mention a few of them. Voluptuousness was the Sin of the Old World; they were Eating and Drinking, Marrying and giving in Marriage, pleasing the Lust of the Eye, the Lust of the Flesh, and the Pride of Life, until the Day of the Flood.

Gen. 6.

Mat. 24.

37, 38, 39.

This also was the Condition of Sodom; Christ himself has exprest it in these words: In the Dayes of Lot they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; the same Day, that Lot went out of Sodom,

Gen. 19.

Luke 22.

28, 29.

it rained Fire and Brimstone from Heaven, and destroyed them all. The Prophet Ezekiel has it in these words, 'speaking to Jerusalem; Be-

Ezek. 16.

49, 50.

bold, this was the Iniquity of thy Sister Sodom, Pride, Fulness of Bread and Abundance of Idleness was in her and her Daughters; neither did she strengthen the Hand of the Poor and Neeedy, and they were Haughty, and committed Abomination before me, therefore I took them away, as I saw good. And it is very Remarkable, that the Voluptuousness of the Israelites was joyned with their Idolatry. It is said, that when Moses was in the Mount, the People Impatient of his Stay sat down to Eat and to Drink, and rose up to Play: they had got

Exod. 32.

a Calf of Gold, and were Dancing about it. But it was a Dismal Ball, and they paid dear for their Junket; for several Thousands were Slain: and it is said, That God Plagued the People. Job's Children had as ill Success in their Festivals, they went from House to House Eating and Drinking; and a

Job 1.

Tempest rose, and smote the Four Corners of the House and Kill'd them. But most expresse is that Complaint of God by the Mouth of the Prophet *Amos* against the *Voluptuous Jews*: *Ye that put so far away the Evil Day, and cause the Seat of Violence to come near; that lie upon Beds of Ivory and stretch themselves upon their Couches; and eat the Lambs out of the Flock, and Calves out of the midst of the Stall. That Chant at the Sound of the Viol, and invent to themselves Instruments of Musick like Dances.* *Amos* 6. 3, vid: *that drink Bowls of Wine and anoint themselves with the chief Ointments; but* *& ch.* 8. 10. *they are not grieved for the Affliction of Joseph.* Therefore now shall they go Captive with the First that go Captive, and the Banquet of them that stretched themselves shall be removed. And I will turn your Feasts into Mourning, and all your Songs into Lamentation; and I will make the End thereof as a bitter Day.

I shall Sum up these Excesses, and Conclude the Instances with the Story of *Dives*, more commonly known, then reverently believed: It is delivered to us by the Great Lord of Truth in these Words. "There was as Certain Rich Man, which was cloathed in Purple and Fine Linnen, and fared Sumptuously every Day. And there was a Certain Beggar, named *Lazarus*, which was laid at his Gate full of Sores, and desiring to be fed with the Crums, which fell from the Rich Man's Table: moreover the Dogs came, and licked his Sores. And it came to pass, that the Beggar died, and was carried by the Angels into *Abraham's Bosom*. The Rich Man also died and

“ and was buried : And in Hell he lift up his Eyes,
 “ being in Torments, and seeth *Abraham* afar off and
 “ *Lazarus* in his Bosom. And he cried and said, Fa-
 “ ther *Abraham*, have mercy on me, and send *La-*
 “ *zarus*, that he may dip the tip of his Finger in water,
 “ and cool my Tongue, for I am Tormented in this
 “ Flame. But *Abraham* said, Son, remember that
 “ thou in thy Life-time receivedst thy good things, &
 “ likewise *Lazarus* Evil things; but now he is comfor-
 “ ted, and thou art tormented. And besides all this, be-
 “ tween us & you there is a Great Gulf fix’d, so that they
 “ which would pass from hence to you, cannot, neither
 “ can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

This Great Passage comprehends the *State of Men* in both Worlds; it shews to us, what that Life is in this World, which leads to *Misery* in the Next, and what to *Happiness*. No *Sensual Man*, no *Voluptuous Person*, not those that deck themselves with *Delicate Apparel*, and fare *Sumptuously* every Day, that love their *Back* and their *Belly* more then God and the *Poor*, shall be received into *Abraham’s Bosom*, or dwell in *Blessedness* forever; let none deceive themselves, the jealous God will not be mocked: If ye Sow to the *Flesh*, ye shall reap *Corruption*; but if ye sow to the *Spirit*, ye shall reap *Life Everlasting*. They that live in *Pleasures*, Kill the *Just*, they Crucifie the *Just Witness* in themselves: such Treasure up *wrath* against the Day of *Wrath*. *Wo*, *Anguish* and *Trisulation* to every *Soul* that doth *Evil*, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, *Professor* or *Profane*, *Christian* or *Infidel*: For the *Dives’s* under all these Names must be turned into Hell, but such as through *Patience* and *Well-doing* wait for *Immortality*, as poor

Lazarus

Lazarus did, after all their *Poverty, Neglect* and *Hunger* shall receive *Glory, Honour* and *Eternal Life*. And truly, it is some Comfort to the *Miserable* in this World, that they shall not live always in it, and that they have to do with a God, who is no *Respecter of Persons*: This Judge is impartial; the *Poor* are upon Even Terms with the *Rich*; and it will not be *Quality*, but *Integrity*; not *Riches* but *Righteousness*, which will recommend us to him. No wonder then, if the Prophet *Jeremiah* in the Name of God, charged the *Ancient Jews* Not to go into the House of Feasting; and that *Ecclesiastes* should say, That it is better to go to the House of Mourning, than to the House of Feasting, since so many Evils follow it. But there is one Feast, that even *Christ* himself allows us; though I have little Reason to believe, it will be Imitated, when I consider the *Natural Aversness*, that is even among *Proseft Christians* to his *Self-denying Precepts* and

Luk. 14. 12, Example. Then said *Jesus*, When thou makest a Dinner or a Supper, call not thy Friends or thy Brethren, neither thy Kinsmen nor thy Rich Neighbours, lest they also bid thee again, and a Recompence be made thee (This would beget Feasting, the thing which is to be avoided: no such matter.) But when thou makest a Feast, call the *Poor, the Maimed, the Lame, the Blind*, and thou shalt be Blessed, for they cannot recompense thee; but thou shalt be recompensed at the Resurrection of the Just. There are few, that strive to obey this Counsel; there is so little of *Fashion* or of *Interest* in it. What! Persons of *Quality* feast the *Poor*? Carve for the *Maimed*, and feed the *Blind*? 'tis too Mean, too *Ignominious*: If they have the *Bones*, the

Scraps

Scraps, the Crums, 'tis well: No, no, this Doctrine is too like him, that taught it, to be practised by them that are so Unlike him; they that follow him in these things, must Take up the Cross, Despise the Shame, and Sow in Hope: But because there is an Everlasting Recompence for those that do, I fervently desire of God, that it would please him to put it into the Minds of both Magistrates and People to Love Mercy, Do Justice, walk humbly with the Lord, and Meekly and Charitably towards all men. I beseech you in the Tender Bowels of a Christian Man to consider of the Present Conjunction: is this a Time for Feasts and Revels, Plays and Pastimes, when the very Wrath of God seems to hang by a slender Thread over our Heads? O! let your Moderation be known unto all men, now the Lord is so near at hand.

And I do humbly pray the Supreme Authority of this Land, to put a speedy Check to these Exorbitances, to Discountenance these Excesses by the Revival of those Old Laws, and in making of such New Ones, as may be thought convenient to prevent such Pride and Prodigality. For I think, I may both with Modesty and Truth affirm, if the very Unnecessary Expences of most Ranks or Degrees in this Kingdom could be brought into one Publick Purse, they would arise to Three Times more Money, than either is given or is requisite to the Maintenance of the Poor that are in it: and whether this be a thing Practicable or no, it matters not; the very Preventing of that Excess, which is amongst us, will be pleasing to Almighty God, and one Way or other Beneficial to the Government.

It

It may not be improper for me here to add by way of *Appendix* to this Head of Excess the Sin of *GAMING*, an Invention of much Mischief in the World, & therefore inconsistent both with *Christianity* and *Civil Government*. The *Evils* that attend it, are neither small nor few: It is *First* a Great Enemy to *Business*, and that Just Care, that people ought to have for the Discharge of their Respective Capacities in their *Civil Affairs*. *Next*, It is one of the Greatest Thieves to Mens *Estates*: Many brave Families have been ruin'd by a *Gamester*: That which hath been got by the *Care* and *Prudence* of a Father, it may be hath been lost in one Night by the *Extravagant Humor* of a Son: But that the Reward of *Virtue* should be the *Stake* of *Folly*, and the Acquest of *Worthy Ancestors* exposed to the *Chance* and *Hazard* of the *Die*, is such Impiety to *God's Providence*, Ingratitude to *Parents*, Injury to their own *Families* and *Disgrace* to the *Government*, that I conceive, it may very well deserve the Care of our *Superiors*, to prevent that *Extravagancy* for the future. *Thirdly*, It is a great *Consumer* of *Time*. They who are addicted to *Gaming*, are the most Idle and Useless people in the *Government*; and give me leave to say, that men are *Accountable* to the *Government* for their *Time*: there ought to be no Idleness in the Land; for that End *Bridewells* are provided. Of many other Sins people are *Weary*, but of this never, unless to *Sleep*, or *Eat*, or for *Want* of *Money* to *Play*: We are commanded to *Redeem the Time*, because the *Dayes* are *Evil*; but these people chuse rather to *Lose their Time*, and *fall into the Evil*, they should

should avoid. A *Gamester* and a *Christian* are as opposite as a *Saint* and a *Sinner*; for the *Christian* looks to God in the increase of his *Estate*, the *Gamester* to Skill and Chance; and there is no more of God in his Mind, than there is in his *Game*: and it cannot be otherwise. *Fourthly*, Therefore *Gaming* deserves to be suppress'd, because it has been the Occasion of *Breach of Friendship*, *Quarrels*, *Bloodshed* and *Murder*: if we ought to shun the Occasions of Evil, to be sure we ought not to indulge them.

The *Last* Mischief that belongs to *Gaming* (which I shall mention at this time) is the *Horrid OATHS* and *Passionate Imprecations* used by the generality of *Gamesters*; but because they are not confin'd to *Gaming*, but run through the whole *Conversation* of men, they may very well challenge a place among those *Four Crying Sins*, that I found my self Obliged in Conscience to Complain of to such, as have Power in their Hands to punish and suppress them. I have therefore reserved to speak of *Oaths* and *Blasphemies* till last, because I take them to be the most *Provoking Sin*. The other Enormities of *Drunkeness*, *Whoredom* and *Excess in Apparel, Furniture, Feastings* and *Gaming* do more immediately relate to our selves; and are therefore Sins against God, because they are a Transgression of that *Order*, which he hath placed in the *Nature* of things: but *Oaths* and *Blasphemies* must be referred to God himself; they are Sins committed more immediately against his *Being*, his *Name*, and the *Majesty* and *Dignity* of his *Nature*. It is Horrible to hear, how he is called upon about every thing, be it never so *Trivial*; yea, about nothing, and worse than nothing. He is

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Summon'd at their *Games*, their *Sports*, their *Obsecrations*, in their *Drunkenness*, *Whoredoms*, *Murders*, *Rapines* and *Treachery*: there is a Generation that cannot speak without him, though they live without him; They would make him a *Voucher* of all their *Falsblood* and a *witness* for their *Lyes*, as often as they would have them believed. But I tremble to Remember, with what *Presumption* some Men, when transported into *Rage*, Invoke him to *Damn* those, they are *Angry* with, yea, themselves too! and how *Impiously* they send him at their pleasure upon the Errands of their *Vengeance*! Can there be greater *Blasphemy*, then to dare so much as to think, that the *Holy*, *Wise* and *Just* God should be the Executioner of their *Passion*, & *Fury*, and the Avenger of their *Malice* and *Corrupt Interests*! And it is Observable, that if in any thing they are *Cross'd* or *Disappointed*, they fall a *Swearing*, *Cursing*, *Damning*, *Blaspheming*, as if the Name of God should make them Satisfaction; and that it were a Sort of *Ease* to them, to deliver themselves of a *Burden* of *Oaths*.

But that which aggravates this Evil, is the *Impudence* of the people that commits it: they are not Contented to use it at *Home* and at *Ale-Houses* and *Taverns* abroad; but in the open *Streets*, *Markets* and *Fairs*, in the most Notorious Places of Commerce and Traffic, to the Dishonour of God, the Grief and Offence of *Sober Men*, and the *Bad Example* of those that are not so. But this *Shameful Impiety* ends not here; it has not only prevailed with the *Populace*, the *Cannale*, the *Vulgar*; but the *Men of Quality*, the *Gentry* and the *Nobles* of the *Realm*, to whom God in his Providence

dence hath been more Propitious placing, them at the Distance of *Example* and *Imitation* to the Multitude. Even those, that ought to be the *Heads* of our *Tribes*, the *Leaders* of the people, whose *Virtue* should at least keep Pace with their *Quality*, are guilty with this *Base Custom*; and too many of them more concerned in it, than the *Meanest* of the People. And to carry this Practice to the *Utmost Height* of that Mischief it seems Capable of doing, but too many (God knows!) of those in *Authority* use it, even the Men, that by *Law* should suppress it! And if Men of *Office* and *Power* ought in their several Trusts to be a *Terror* to *Evil-doers*, methinks, they should not suffer the *Name* of the *God* of the *Nation* (whom they pretend to worship) to be so *profanely us'd* and *blasphemed*; and least of all, that they should be the Men themselves, that Commit the *Enormities*, they should punish. To say Truth (and with *Grief* of Soul I speak it) so Universal is this *Contagion* in the Kingdom, that not only the *Youth*, but the *Children* are infected: The *Boyes* of seven Years Old, that in my time did not think upon an *Oath*, are now full of their *God-damn-you's* and *God-damn-me's* at their *Sports* and *Playes*! And the *Women* of our Nation (especially those of any *Rank*) who by a *Reserv'd Education* and the *Modesty* of their *Sex* were scarcely ever heard to *Curse* even what they did not like, (much less to *Swear* upon Ordinary Occasions) are some of them grown *Hardy* enough to do *Both*. At whose Door must all these *Mischiefs* lie? I beseech God to put it into the *Hearts* of our *Superiors*, to Use their *Utmost Diligence*, to rebuke and suppress this and the like *Impieties*!

We profess our selves to be *Christians, Followers* of that *JESUS*, in whose Mouth no Guile was ever found, what Precept did he ever give us? what Example hath he left us to Countenance this Practice? 'Tis true, he Charg'd his Disciples, *Not to Swear at all*, but we cannot think our selves to Obey him, when we Swear at Every thing? pray consider the great Difference there is betwixt *Christ* and such *Christians*. *Christ* is Lord of a more Perfect Law, than that which came by *Moses*, that admits of *Oaths* in some Cases, but they were Few, and must be kept upon great Penalties: This New Law of *JESUS* takes away *Oaths* by taking away the Cause and Need of them, namely, *Falsbood* and *Distrust*, and by planting *Plainness*, *Truth* and *Integrity* in the Natures of Men, which makes them such Faithful Disciples to him, and so entirely Brethren to one another, that there seems no farther Use for *Oaths* among Men under that Qualification. Ye have heard of Old Time (saith *Christ Jesus*) [that Men should: Swear: not when they please, nor yet Swear Vainly? No such matter: What then? Thou shalt not For-swear thy self, but Perform thy Vows unto the Lord: This was thus far Good, it was the Perfection of the Law. So it was *Not to Kill*, *Not to Commit Adultery*, but *Christ Jesus* carries it higher: Thou must not be Angry, Thou must not look upon a Woman to lust after her, Thou must not Swear Mat. 5. at all: Thou must not do that, which was Allowed or Dispensed with under the Law. For what the Law could not do through Weakness, I am come to do: Therefore let your Yea be Yea, and your Nay, Nay, speak Truth, what is more, is Needless, nay, 'tis

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'tis *Evil*. This is the Doctrine of Jesus: Certainly then there can be no Agreement between him and the *Swearing, Damning Christians* of this Age, who are so far from *Obeysing* him, whose Name they take, that they are not come to the *Righteousness* of the Law, that condemns all *Vain Swearing*: but lie under the *Heavy Judgment* of the Lord for the Breach of his *Third Commandment*, [*Thou shalt not* take the Name of the Lord thy God in Vain: *Exod. 20. 7.* "vain: for the Lord will not hold him Guiltless, that taketh his Name in vain."] It is esteem'd a *Prophanation* of things set apart for *Divine Worship*, to imploy them in our *Common and Ordinary Services*, and is it not *Prophanation* with a *Vengeance*, to suffer the Name of the Great God to be prostituted at Every Turn by *Lewd and Debauch'd* people? Can we be so Careful of our own Names, and so Careless of Gods? Is it Possible, that we can be so *Tender* of our selves, and so *Unconcern'd* for him? for him, I say, who made us, and gives us *Life, Breath, and Being*, to whom we Owe our selves, and all that we are. But that Men to *Right* themselves, upon every little *Affront* should oppose their Lives to *Utmost Peril*, and not find in their Heart so much as to *Rebuke* the *Indignities* daily put upon Heaven, is an ill Proof of *Zeal and Religion*. But as *Insensible* as such are of their *Duty*, God is not wanting to his own *Glory*: he has forbidden these things; let Men disobey at their *Peril*. Ye shall not Swear by my Name falsely, saith God, neither shalt thou *Prophane the Name of thy God, I am the LORD*. Hear O ye *Swearers*, the *Judgment* of God has denounc'd against you! Every One that Swareth shall be

*be Cut off, [how Cut off?] PROM GOD:
 Jer. 23. 10, Again, The Land is full of Adulteries, and
 19. Zach. 5. 3 because of Swearing the Land Mourneth:
 Behold! the Whirl-wind of the Lord shall bea-
 wily fall upon the Head of the Wicked.*

To this I shall add a Brief Reflection upon that Pernicious Sin of *PROPHANENESS* so near a kin to *Oaths* and *Blasphemy*. Such is the *Degeneracy* of the Age we are fallen into, that *Prophaneness* does not only go Unpunish'd, but boldly lays Claim to *wis*, and fills the Conversation of too many of those, that think themselves rais'd above the *Genius* of the *Vulgar*. He is reputed *Formal*, that will not be *Rude* to *Sacred Things*; and a Man *Insipid*, of no *Sence* or *Salt*, who cannot *Feel Devotion*: And which is strange, they make the Bible a sort of *Common Place*; but 'tis for *Mockery*, not for *Piety*. The *Phrases* they use, are pick'd to *Abuse* that Holy Book; and that *Prophaneness* is plac'd to the Account of *Wit*: But truly, if Men must *Relinquish Religion* at the Peril of passing else for *Fools*, and *Abuse Scripture* to purge themselves from the *suspicion* of *Reverencing* it, there is here an *Unhappiness* in being *Conscientious*, and on the side of this World the *Temptation* to be *Prophane*, is stronger than the *Encouragement* to be *Virtuous*. For this is my Soul grieved, that Men should use their *Wit* to *Abuse* him, that gave it them: and that though there is more to be said for *Religion*, than there can be said against it, both with Respect to its *Reasonableness* and *Usefulness*, and that the Hazard of being *Irreligious*, is incomparably greater on the part of these *Atheistical Scoffers*, than of Men professing to fear God and believe

have another World; they would yet be so *Constant* and *Obstinate* in their *loose and lowd Conversation*! But if the *Prophaning* of the least thing, that was Dedicated to the Worship of God in the Times of the *Law*, was so *Hainous a Sin*; what should we say, when men *stick not to Prophane the Name of God himself*, and *scoff at his Revealed will*, so much Greater, than either *Temple*, or *Altar*, or any of those *Rites* belonging unto them!

And to you all, that live in the Practice of these *Crying Sins* I have at this time insisted upon, this I say unto you in the Fear of God: **REPENT OF THE EVIL OF YOUR DOINGS!** Bring not down the *Judgments* of God upon this Land; they may be the *Affliction* of many, but they will be your *Punishment*: ye shall pay the *Reckoning* of their *Sufferings* in the other World, and God will charge you with the *Calamity* that they shall Endure! Remember, before it is too late. *Dreadful Things* are denounced against the Wicked; Therefore go not on to Gratifie your Hearts *Lusts* and to forget the Living God; for this shall be the End of such Works, that God will certainly bring you to *Judgment*: And who

may *Abide the Day of that Coming*? and who shall stand when he appears? No *Flesh* can stand in his Presence. Consider the Awakening Saying of the Apostle, *That the Righteous scarcely are saved*; and if so, *Where shall the Ungodly, where shall the Wretched Sinner appear*? How shall such be able to hold up their Heads in the Day of his *Wrath*, in the Hour of his *Judgment*, at that Great Time of *Reckoning*, when a *Final Account* shall be past, when

Eccles.
11. 9.

Mal. 3.
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when all must render an *Account* of the Deeds they have done, and receive the *Reward* due unto them? Therefore *while it is to day*, *harden not your Hearts* against God and his Law: flatter not your selves; To be *Christians*, ye must be like *Christ*: and if ye will be Sav'd from *Wrath*, ye must be Redeem'd from *Sin*. Encrease not therefore Guilt upon your *Consciences* by Rebelling against the Light, that shines in them: but lay your *Impieties* to Heart, mourn with true Contrition of *Soul*, and yet love *Righteousness*, and hate *Iniquity*; and ye will prevent the *Civil Magistrate*, and probably avert the *Indignation* of God, that hangs over the *Nation*.

Having thus ended my *Reflections* upon the *Five great Crying Sins* of the Kingdom, and my Reproof of the *Actors* and *Promoters* of them; give me leave to make my *Humble* and *Christian Address* to you, that are in *Authority*. And in the *First* place, I beseech you to remember, that though ye are as *Gods* on Earth, yet ye shall Dye like *Men*; that ye are Encompass'd with like *Passions*, and are subject to *Sin*. Such therefore of you, as may be concern'd in any of these *Enormities* (to what-ever Degree of *Guilt* it be) I beg you in the Name of God to *search your selves*, and to be Just to your own *Souls*. O! let the Mercies and Providences of God constrain you to *Unfeigned Repentance*! Turn to the Lord, Love Righteousness, Hate Oppression, and he will turn to you, and love you and bless you.

In the *Next* place, be pleas'd to consider your *Commission* and examine the Extent of your *Authority*: ye will

will find, that God and the *Government* hath impower'd you to punish these *Impieties*: and it is so far from being a Crime, that it is your *Duty*. This is not troubling Men for *Faith*, nor perplexing People for Tenderness of *Conscience*: for there can be no Pretence of *Conscience* to be Drunk, to Whore, to be Voluptuous, to Game, to Swear, Curse, Blaspheme and Prophane, no such Matter: these are Sins against Nature and against *Government*, as well as against the *Written Laws* of God. They lay the Ax to the Root of *Humane Society*, and are the *Common Enemies* of Mankind: 'twas to prevent these *Enormities*, that *Government* was instituted; and shall *Government* Indulge that, which it is Instituted to *Destroy*? this were to render *Magistracy* Useless, and the Bearing of the *Sword* Vain: there would be then no such thing in *Government*, as *A Terror to Evil-Doers*; but every one would do that which he thought Right in his own Eyes. God Almighty defend us from this *Anarchy*!

There are *Three Great Reasons*, which inforce my *Supplication*. The *First* is, The *Preservation* of the *Government*, which by such *Improvvidence* and *Debauchery* is like to be greatly Weakened, if not Destroyed. The *Industry*, *Wealth*, *Health* and *Authority* of the Nation are Deeply concern'd in the *Speedy* and *Exemplary Punishment* of these Extravagancies. This is the *Voice of Interest* for the *Common Good* of the *Whole Society*, *Rulers* and *Ruled*.

But there is an *Higher Voice*, unto which *Christian Men* ought to have *Regard*, and that is the *Voice* of God, who requires us to *Fear him* and obey his *Righteous Commandments* at the Peril of making him our *Ene-*

my, whom we should make our Common Friend and Protector; for upon his Goodness depend our very Natural and Civil Comforts. So that it is our Interest To be Good: and that is none of the least Arguments for Religion, that the Piety and Practice of it is the Peace and Prosperity of Government; and consequently, that Vice, the Enemy of Religion, is at the same time the Enemy of Humane Society. Who then should be more concern'd for the Preservation of Virtue, than Government? who in its Abstract and True Sense is not only founded upon Virtue, but without the Preservation of Virtue it is impossible to maintain the Best Constitution, that can be made. And however some particular Men may prosper, that are Wicked, and several private Good Men miscarry in the things of this World (in which sense things may be said to happen alike to all, to the Righteous as to the Wicked) yet I dare boldly affirm (and challenge any Man to the Truth of the thing) that in the many Volumes of the History of the Ages and Kingdoms of the World there is not one Instance to be found, where the Hand of God was against a Righteous Nation, or where the Hand of God was not against an Unrighteous Nation? and where a Just Government perish'd, or an Unjust Government long prosper'd? Kingdoms are rarely as Short lived as Men, yet they also have a Time to Die: but as Temperance giveth Health to Men, so Virtue gives Time to Kingdoms; and as Vice brings Men betimes to their Grave, so Nations to their Ruin: 'Tis the Reason given by God himself for the Destruction of those Countries, that he gave into the Hands of the Children of Israel; They were Full of Uncleanness, Adulteries, Fornication and

and other Impieties. And though he is *Sovereign Lord* of the World, and may dispose of the Kingdoms therein as pleaseth him (for he that gives, can take away; and he that builds, can cast down: and Mankind is but a Tenant at will to receive or surrender at his Lord's Good Pleasure,) yet he useth not that *Prerogative* to Justify his Gift of those Countries to the Jews: but at the End of his Prohibition of *Unlawful Marriages* and *Unlawful Lusts* he charges them in these words; *Defile not you your selves in any of these things: for in all these the Nations are defiled, which I cast out before you; And the Land is defiled: therefore do I visit the Iniquity thereof upon it; and the Land it self VOMITETH OUT her Inhabitants. Ye shall therefore Keep my Statutes and my Judgments, and shall not Commit any of these Abominations, neither any of your own Nation, nor any Stranger, that sojourneth among you; that the Land Spue not you Out also, when ye defile it, as it Spued Out the Nations, that were before you.* Levit. 18. 24, 25, 26, 28.

So Saul's Disobedience was his Destruction, and his Sin made Way for David's Title: Saul died (saith the Sacred Story) for his Transgression; this made the Philistines Conquerors: his own Sins Beat him and Kill'd him. Saul died for his Transgression; then if he had not sinn'd, he had lived; he had beaten his Enemies and kept the Kingdom? yes, the place implies it. This then should deter all Men, but Kings especially, who have so much to lose here, and so much to answer for hereafter. But what was Saul's Sin? It was first, not keeping, but disobeying the Word of the Lord, both as it came by the *Admonition of Samuel*, God's

Prophet, and as it spoke the Mind of God to him in his own *Conscience* (for *Moses* had said before, that the *Word of God* was *nigh in the Heart*, and in God's Name commanded the Children of *Israel* to *Obey and Do it* :) In short, he refused the *Counsel of God*, and God for his *Counsellor*. For in the *Next* place he betakes himself to One that had a *Familiar Spirit*, for *Advice* (saith the Story) He enquired not of the *Lord*, therefore he *Slew him* and turned the *Kingdom unto David*. There are too many people troubled with *Familiar Spirits*; it were well, if they were less *Familiar* with them: Had *Saul* trusted in God, he needed not to have been driven to that *Straight*; He that was made *King* by God's Appointment and endued with a *Good Spirit*, so basely to degenerate, as to run to a *Witch* for *Counsel*! To this *Darkness* and *Extremity Iniquity* will bring Men. And truly, a *Wo* follows all such persons; answerable to that Expression of God by the Prophet: *Wo unto them that take Counsel, and not of me. When Saul* (saith the place) *was little in his own Eyes, God honour'd him; he made him Head and King of the* 1 Sam. 15, 17. *Tribes of Israel*: but when *Saul* grew *Proud*, God deserted him, & for his *Disobedience* destroyed him. And what befell the Family of *Saul*, in some *After-Ages* befell both *Kings* and *People*, and *Worse*; for their Land was *Invaded* first by the *Agyptians*, and then by the *Caldeans* and *Babylonians*: Their *Temple* was *rifled*, their *Treasures* taken, and their *Kings, Princes, Nobles,* 2 Kings 24, 14. *Artificers, and Mighty Men of Valour* (yea all, save the *Poorest* of the *people*) were

were kill'd or carried away Captive by the King of Babilon. The Reason rendred is this: Because the Kings did that, which was Evil in the sight of God, and stifned their Necks, and hardened their Hearts from turning unto the Lord God of Israel; and because the Chief of the Priests and of the People transgressed very much after all the Abominations of the Hea- 2 Chro. 36. then: and when God sent his Messengers to Reprove and Warn them (and that out of his Great Compassion;) they Wickedly Mocked his Messengers, Despised his Words and Misused his Prophets, till his Wrath came upon them.

I will here End my Instances out of Sacred Story: and let us now briefly Consider, what the Histories of other places will tell us; that we may Observe some Proportion of Agreement in the Providences of God throughout the World.

The First Empire had Nimrod's Strength, and the Wisdom of the Caldeans to establish it; and whilst their Prudence and Sobriety lasted, they prosper'd: No sooner came Voluptuousness, then the Empire decayed; and was at last by the Base Effeminacies of Sardanapalus (in whom that Race ended) transfer'd to another Family. It was the Policy of an Assyrian King to subdue the Strength of Babilon (then under good Discipline) not to Invade it with Force, but to DEBAUCH it. Wherefore he sent in Players, Musicians, Cooks, Harlots, &c. and by those means introducing Corruption of Manners, there was little more to do, than to take it. Nebuchadnezar By his Virtue and Industry seen in the Siege of Tyre and in many Great Enterprises, recover'd and enlarg'd the Empire; and his Discipline (tho'e

(those Times consider'd) was so *Excellent*, that it was prais'd in Scripture. But when he grew *Proud* and *Foolish*, forgetting that *Providence*, that had shewn itself so kind to him, he became a *Beast* and grased amongst *Beasts*; till God, whom he had forgotten, had restor'd him the *Heart* of a *Man* and his *Throne* together.

He dying left *Evil Merodach* Heir to his Crown, not his Conduct, nor the Knowledge of what God had done by him: In his Time *Pride* and *Luxury* encreas'd, but came not to its full Pitch, till the Reign of *Belshazzar*, who did not only as *Nebuchadnezzar*, live, but dye a *Beast*. In him we have the Exact Example of a *Dissolute* and *Miserable Prince*; he thought to fence himself against Heaven and Earth, dissolv'd in *Pleasures* he worshipp'd no other God: His Story may make us well Conclude, that *God and Man* deserts those, that desert themselves, and neglect the Means of their own Preservation. The City was taken before he knew it, and the *Sword* almost in his Bowels, before he believ'd it: his *Sensuality* had wrapt him up in such a *Desperate Security*. But he fell not by the Hand of one like himself; God, who had determin'd the End, prepar'd the Means. *Cyrus* and his *Persians* were the Men: the people were *Poor*, Inhabiting a *Barren Country*, but *Hardy* and of *Sober Manners*. *Cyrus* God had endued with *Excellent Natural Qualities*, cultivated (as Story tells us) by the Care of *Four* of the *Most Temperate, Just and Wise Persons* of those Times: this was he, whom God honour'd with the Name of his *Shepherd*, and was the Executioner of his *Vengeance* upon the *Assyrians*. While he reigned, all was well, but after he and his *Virtuous*

Companions deceased, their Children fell into the *Vices* of the *Assyrians*; and though they Reign'd from the *Indus* to the *Helleſpont*, they ſoon became the Conqueſt of the *Greeks*.

Never was there a greater Inſtance given of the Weakneſs of *Pomp* and *Luxury*, than in the Reſiſtance made at *Thermipoli*, where 300 *Virtuous Spartans* encounter'd the *Vaſt Army* of *Xerxes*, conſiſting of no leſs than *Seventeen Hundred Thouſand Men*. In ſhort, the Deſeats of *Salamity* and *Platea*, the Expeditions of *Xenophon* with *Cyrus* the Younger almoſt into *Babylon*, and the Wars of *Agexilam* into *Aſia* made it Evident, that *Greece* wanted only *Union* and an *Head*, to make her ſelf Miſtriſs of that *Vaſt Empire*.

At laſt comes *Alexander* of *Macedon*, with the beſt Diſciplin'd People that was then known: The Diſpute was ſhort, where *Steel* was againſt *Gold*, *Sobriety* againſt *Luxury*, and *Men* againſt (Men that were turn'd) *Women*. Thus the *Persians*, prepar'd by their own *Vices*, God deliver'd into the Hands of the *Greeks*, who as much excelled them in their *Virtue*, as they were ſhort of their *Dominion* and *Wealth*. But this laſted not long, for *Alexander*, who died young, ſurviv'd his *Virtue* and *Reputation* by falling into thoſe *Vices* of the *Nations* God had given him Power to *Trample* under Foot; inſomuch that he, who was before *Generous*, became *Barbarous* and *Tyrannical*. *Egypt*, *Aſia* and *Macedon* held up their Heads a while, but not reſiſting the *Torrent* of *Lewdneſs*, that came upon them, ſuffered themſelves to be over-whelm'd with *Miſery* and *Confuſion*.

Nor has this Calamity been peculiar to *Monarchies*,
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for several *Republicks* have fallen by the same Mischief. That of *Lacedæmon* or *Sparta*, so *Severe* in her *Constitution*, and so *Remarkable* for the *Virtue* of her People (and that for many Ages) at last growing slack in the Execution of her Laws, and suffering *Corruption* insensibly to Creep into her *Manners*, she became no more Considerable, but *weak* and *Contemptible*.

The same may be said of *Athens*, the Great School of *Learning*, and of all the *Republicks* of *Greece* most *Famous* for her *Virtue* and *Philosophy* (when that word was understood not of *Vain Disputing*, but of *Pious Living*) she no sooner fell into *Luxury*, but *Confusion* and *Revolutions* made her as *Inconsiderable*, as she had been *Great*.

Rome, as she was the Greatest *Common-wealth*, so the greatest Example of *Gentiles* in *Virtue* and *Vice*, in *Happiness* and in *Misery*: Her *Virtue* and *Greatness* are Commemorated by *Austin* the Father, and the latter made the Effect of the former. [God (saith he) gave the Romans the Government of the World, as a Reward for their *Virtue*.] Their *Manners* were so Good: and their *Policy* so Plain and Just, that nothing could stand before them. And truly, they seem'd to have been employ'd by God to punish the *Impious*, and to instruct the *Barbarous Nations*: and so very Jealous was she of the Education of her Youth, that she would not suffer them to converse with the *Luxurious Greeks*. But *Carelessness* with length of Time overcoming the *Remarkable Sobriety* of her *Manners*, who before seem'd *Invincible*, she falls into *Equal*, if not *Greater Miseries*, than those that went before her (though she had not only Warning enough from those Examples, but

but from *Hannibal's Army* and her great Enemy) For one Winter's *Quarter* of *Hannibal* and his *Army* in the Luxurious City of *Capua* prov'd a greater Overthrow to them, than all the *Roman Consuls* and *Armies*. They that had been *Victors* in so many *Battles*, turn'd *Slaves* to *Dancers*, *Bouffoons*, *Cooks* and *Harlots*; so as from that time they never did any thing Sutable to the Reputation gain'd by their *Former Actions*; but fell without much Difficulty into the *Roman Hands*. Nay, not long before *Rome* her self encountered one of the greatest *Dangers*, that ever had befallen her by the *Corruption* of her own People, in the same Place, by the like Means: and though this *Defection* was recover'd by those that remain'd entire in their Manners; yet after the Overthrow of *Antiochus*, *Mithridates*, *Tygranes*, that the *Riches* and *Vices* of *Asia* came with a full stream upon them, the very Heart of the City became infected: and the Lewd *Asiatics* had this Revenge in their own *Fall*, that they ruin'd by their *Vices* those they were no wayes able to resist by their *Force*, like the Story of the *Dying Centaure*. Thus *Pride*, *Avarice*, *Luxury* having prepared *Rome* for Destruction, it soon followed. *Virtue* now grew Intolerable in *Rome*, where *Vice* dared not for Ages to shew its Face. The *Worthiest Men* were cut off by *Proscriptions*, *Battles* or *Murders*, as if she resolv'd *ipsam Virtutem exscindere*: She destroyed her own Citizens, and sent for *Strangers* to protect her, which ruin'd her. Which proves, that the *Kingdom* or *State*, that under God doth not subsist by its own *Strength*, *Prudence* and *Virtue*, cannot stand; for the *Goths*, *Huns* and others despised to serve those, whom they

excelled in *Power* and *Virtue*, and instead of *Guarding* took their *Dominion* from them. And truly, it might rather be called a *Journey*, than a *Military Expedition*, to go and pillage *Rome*; so weak had her *Vices* made her: she that was feared by all *Nations*, became the *Prey* of all *Nations* about her. Thus ended that *Once Potent* and *Virtuous Common-wealth*.

The *Vandals* in *Africk* soon became *Effeminate* and *Lewd*; which brought upon themselves *Speedy Ruin*. The *Goths* set up a *Powerful Kingdom* in *Spain* and *Part of France*; by the *Sobriety* of their *Manners* it flourished near *Four Hundred Years*: but its *End* was not *Unlike* the rest. Two corrupt *Princes Vuitza* and *Roderic* by their *dissolute Example* debauch'd the *People*, inso much that men run an *Hazard* to be *Virtuous*: This made their *Destruction* *Easie* to those, whom *God* sent against them; which were the *Mores*, occasion'd by the *Loss* of these *Kings* dishonouring *Count Juliano's Daughter*. In the *Time* of his *Calamity* in vain did he expect the *Aid* of those that had been his *Flatterers*, and the *Companions* of his *Vices*: His *Security* (the *Effect* of his *Luxury*) was his *Ruin*. For whilst he thought he had no body to *Subdue*, but his own *People*; by *Abusing* them he *Cut off his own Arms*, and made himself an *Easie-Prey* to his *Real Enemies*: And so he perisht with his *Posterity*, that had been the *Cause* of the *Mischief*, which befel that *Great Kingdom*. However, so it came to pass, that the *Remainder* of the *Goths* mixing with the *Ancient Spaniards* (to that *Day* distinct) recovered the *Liberty* and *Reputation* of the *Kingdom* by an *Entire Reformation* of *Manners* and a *Virtue* in *Conversation* as *Admirable*,

as the *Vices*, by which their Fathers had fallen, were *Abominable*. But the present impoverished *State of Spain* can tell us, they have not continued that *Virtuous Conduct* of their Ancestors: the Increase of their *Vices* hath decayed their *Strength*, lessened their *People* and their *Commerce*.

But why should we overlook our own Country? that whether we consider the *Invasion* of the *Romans*, *Saxons* or *Normans*, *Neglect* of *Virtue* and *Good Discipline* (and the present *Inhabitants* giving themselves up to *Ease* and *Pleasure*) was the Cause (if *Gildas* the *Brittain*, and *Andrew Horn* may be credited: for as the *First* bitterly *Inveighed* against the *Looseness* of the *Brittains*, threatening them with all those *Miseries*, that afterwards followed; so the *Last* tells us, that the *Brittains* having forgotten *God*, and being overwhelmed with *Luxury* and *Vice*, it pleased *God* to give the Land to a poor People of the *Northern Parts* of *Germany*, called *Saxons*, that were of plain and honest *Manners*.) *God* is *Unchangeable* in the Course of his *Providence* as to these things, *The like Causes produce the like Effects*, as every *Tree* doth naturally produce its own *Fruits*. 'Tis true, *God* is not *Careless* of the *World*; he feeds the young *Ravens*, clothes the *Lilies*, takes Care of *Sparrows*, and of us, so as not an *Hair* of our *Head* falls to the ground without his *Providence*; but if Men despise his *Law*, hate to be *Reformed*, spend their *Time* and *Estate* in *Luxury* and persist to work *Wickedness*; he will visit them in his *Wrath*, and consume them in his *fore Displeasure*. To Conclude, *Wars*, *Bloodshed*, *Fires*, *Plunders*, *Wastings*, *Ravishments*, *Slavery* and the like, are the *Miseries* that fol-

low *Immoralities* (the *Common Mischiefs* of *Irreligion*) the *Neglect* of *Good Discipline* and *Government*. Nothing weakens Kingdoms, like *Vice*; it does not only displease Heaven, but disable them. All we have said, proves it; but above all the *Iniquity* and *Voluptuousness* of the *Jews*, God's Chosen, who from being the *Most Prudent*, *Pious* and *Victorious* People, made themselves a *Prey* to all their Neighbours. Their *Vice* had prepared them to be the *Conquest* of the *First Pretender*; and thus from *Free-men* they became *Slaves*. Is God asleep, or does he *Change*? shall not the same *Sins* have the like *Punishment*? at least, shall they not be *punish'd*? Can we believe, *There is a God*, and not believe, that he is the *Rewarder* as of the *Deeds* of *Private Men*, so of the *Works* of *Government*? ought we to think him *Careful* of the *Lesser*, and *Careless* of the *Greater*? this were to suppose, he minded *Sparrows* more than *Men*, and that he took more *Notice* of *Private Persons* than of *States*. But let not our *Superiors* deceive themselves, neither put the *Evil Day* afar off; they are greatly *Accountable* to God for these Kingdoms. If every poor *Soul* must *Account* for the *Employment* of the *small Talent* he has received from God, can we think, that those *High Stewards* of God, the *Great Governours* of the *World* (that so often *Account* with all others) must never come to a *Reckoning* themselves? yes, there is a *Final Sessions*, a *General Assize* and a *Great Term* once for all, where he will *Judge among the Judges*, who is *Righteous in all his ways*: There *Private Men* shall answer only for themselves, but *Rulers* for the *People* as well as themselves. The *Disparity* that is *here*, will be observed *there*: and the

Great.

Greatness of such *Persons*, as shall be then found *Tardy*, will be so far from Extenuating their *Guilt*, that it will fling *Weight* in the *Scale* against them. Therefore give me leave (I do beseech you) to be *Earnest* in my *Humble Address* to you; why should ye not, when none are so much concern'd in the *Good Intention* of it? Thus much for the *First Reason* of my *Supplication*.

My *SECOND Reason* urging me to this *Humble* and *Earnest Supplication*, is the *BENEFIT* of *POSTERITY*. I would think, that there are few People so *Vicious*, as to Care to see their *Children* so; and yet to me it seems a plain Case, that *As we leave the Government, they will find it*: If some *Effectual Course* be not taken, what with *Neglect* and what with *Example*, *Impiety* will be entailed upon our *Children*. Certainly it were better, the *World* ended with us, than that we should transmit our *Vices*, or sow those *Evil Seeds* in our *Day*, that will Ripen to their *Ruin*, and fill our *Country* with *Miseries*, after we are gone; thereby *Exposing* it to the *Curse* of *God* and *Violence* of our *Neighbours*. But it is an *Infelicity* we ought to bewail, that Men are Apt to prefer the *Base Pleasure* of their *Present Extravagancies* to all *Endeavours* after a *Future Benefit*; which besides the *Guilt* they draw upon themselves, our *Poor Posterity* must be greatly *injur'd* thereby: Upon this Occasion I shall take the *Freedom* to say something of *Education*.

The *Truth* is, we are so much out of *Order* in the *Education* of our *Youth*, that I wish I could say, that we had only the *Sin* of *Neglect* to answer for: I fear,
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the *Care* has rather been to *Educate* them in a *Way* of such *Vanities*, as ends in great *Inconveniencies* here, and must needs find *Pexation of Spirit* hereafter. Our *Universities* have made more *Loose*, than *Learned*: and what *Extravagancy* is begun there, is Usually perfected Abroad, or at our own *Inns of Court* at Home, that now and then afford us a few *Able Lawyers*; but the Generality are like the *Man of Old*, who return'd home *Seven times Worse than he went out*. The *Genius* of this *Nation* is not *Inferior* to any in the *World*; 'tis *Industrious*, 'tis *wise*, 'tis *Honest*, 'tis *Valiant*, yet *Soft* and *Merciful*. And (without *Partiality*) we have had *Men*, that have excelled in *Every worthy Qualification*: But I must needs say, it has been more owing to the Goodness of *God* in the *Disposition* of our *Natures*, than the *Prudence* and *Care* of those who had the *Charge* of their *Education*. It was the Saying of a *Wise Man*; *Train up a Child in the Way he should go; and when he is Old, he will not depart from it*. This is prov'd to us every Day; but it is in the *Wrong Way*, in the *Way* of *Idleness*, *Wantonness* and *Impurity* of *Manners*: 'tis worth *While* and *High Time* to make the *Experiment* the other *Way*; to try, what the *Suppression* of *Vice* and the *Encouragement* of *Virtue* will do: in this our *Superiours* must begin, and give their *Example*, as well as shew their *Power*. There is scarcely any one thing, that so much needs the *Wisdom* of the *Nation* in the *Contrivance* of a *New Law*, as the *Education* of our *Youth*, whether we consider the *Piety* or *Prudence* of our *Manners*, the *Good Life* or *Just Policy* of the *Government*: There is such an *Example* of what *Indu-*

try may do, in the Practice of the *Jesuits*, that I hope the *Present Conjunction* will make the Proposal of the thing more welcome to you.

That the *Interest* of the *Jesuits* is the Greatest in the *Roman Church* and *Empire*, is so far from being doubted, that all *Protestants* wish, it were; 'tis our *Trouble* rather than our *Scruple*: it may be, some other *Orders*

Note, The *Jesuits* *Interest*, the Greatest in the *Roman Church*.

are of the same Mind, being much Ecclipsed since the Rise of this *Great Interest*. Ye know, they appeared about the time of the *Reformation*, and apply'd themselves with all *Conceivable Industry* to secure the *Tottering Papacy* against the Progress of it: In this *Attempt* they Ventur'd so much farther, than any of their *Predecessors* in the Church; that they have been esteem'd of *Merit* the Great Ministers and *Governours* of the *Chair* for some *Last Ages*. Indeed, they have almost Engross'd the whole Power of *Church* and *State*; to them all other *Orders* seem but *Small Retailers*: their Great *Politicians*, their *Philosophers*, *Orators*, *Historians* and *Mathematicians* are generally found amongst this Society; so that we scarce see any thing of *Note* come out from Men of that Religion, which is not subscribed E. S. J. The Fame and Apprehension of their Extraordinary *Learning*, and the *Arts* they have to recommend it, have made their *Order* the *Choice* of most *Princes* and *Men of Quality* of that Religion for the *Education* of their Children, in whom they have Carefully instill'd with their Instructions and Principles that peculiar *Respect* to their own *Society*, as hath greatly serv'd to the *Advancement* of it, when they have grown to *Age* and *Power*.

But

But that which above all other *Stratagems* hath prevail'd to extend their Dominion in the *Roman Church*, has been their *Erecting of Schools* (where they have *Colledges*) for the *Free Education of Youth*: The very Doing of it *Gratis* makes it look like *Charity* with the *Poor*, that have little to give; and with the *Rich*, that seldom love to part with Money, to be sure, it is no *Objection*. Thus Obliging the *Parents*, they next fall to making themselves *Grateful* with the *Children*: and here they Exercise not a little *Skill*. They Strictly Observe the *Divers Humors* and *Dispositions* of their Schollars, and take great Care not to baulk their Capacity by *Cross* or *Unsuitable Studies*. But when once they are fix'd, every *Youth* according to his *Genius* it is not Easie to be believed, what pains they take to Allure them to their *Studies*, how they will Tempt them with *Childish Rewards*, and Excite them to their Book by raising an *Emulation* among them: So that to *Excell* is more than a *Rod*; and *Victory*, than any *Chastisement* whatever. By these *Arts* they fit all Capacities with *Suitable Study*, and Cultivate them to the Pitch of *Learning*, they are Capable of; and all with that *Obligation* upon the *Youth* to Love them; that from thence forward they become *Partial Devotees* to the *Advancement* of the Honor and Interest of that *Society*. To Conclude, they have got into their Hands the *Education* of the Generality of the *Youth* of the *Romish Religion* in every Country, from the *King* to the *Peasant*; and being Masters of them, when Boys, they turn *Governors* and *Confessors* to them, when they are Men, so that all seem to have fallen into their Hands, and being but one *Entire Interest* throughout the World,
and

and maintaining a *most punctual Correspondence*, they must needs have the Knowledge and Disposal of the *Affairs of States and Kingdoms* by that Share, they have in the *Counsels of Princes*, and that *great Reliance* that is upon their Judgment and Ability. This, if we regard only the *Romish Religion*, shews great *Wit, Design and Industry*: but if we consider well how Formidable these Arts render them to *Protestant Kingdoms*, it will become us to use our utmost Prudence to *Secure our selves*. And there seems not to me a more Effectual Remedy, than a *Wise and Virtuous Education* of our *Youth*. In order to it let us improve *Methods* not inferior to theirs, but for *better Ends*: Let us use our *Skill* to improve the *Childrens Natural Abilities* to excite them to *Virtue* and Endear the *True Interest* of their own Country to them. I will briefly set down, what at present occurs to me as a good way of *Education*.

(1.) *First*, Let Care be taken *To breed up Youth in MORALITY*: for *Virtue* prepares the Mind, helps the Understanding and gives Industry to compass this. Let no *Books* be used in Schools, in which there may be the least *Indecency*, there were (and not without Reason) Ancient Canons against the *Reading* of such *Heathen Authors*; and not a few *Learned & Sober Men* have rebuked that Practice amongst us: It is an *Affront to Christianity*, yea, to our *Natures*, to fetch our *Wit* or our *Manners* from them. It were well, if some *Tracts of Moral Virtues and Invectives against Vice* were written in those *Languages* we would have *Youth* to learn: for in such *Discourses* they might obtain *Good Manners* with the *Languages*; whereas by tying up

Schools to Heathen Authors, our Youth has learned, Base Obscenities and a Corrupt Conversation.

(2.) In the *Next* place, I would propose some of the easier Parts of *Mathematicks* and the Knowledge of *Plants* and *Natural Bodies* to be compos'd on purpose after a *Familiar Manner*, that they may be Instituted in the Knowledge of *Nature*, and learn *Things* at the same time they learn *Words*.

(3.) The *Last* Sort of Books, which I would recommend (and are in my Opinion most suitable to their Maturity of *Age* and *Understanding*) are such as relate to the *Histories* and *Transactions* of our own *Kingdom*; the *Interest* of the *True Protestant Religion* and *Civil Policy* amongst us. But because there are very few (if any) of these *Discourses* extant, it were Worth the Care of our *Superiors*, and an Act deserving Praise, That some *Skilful, Soter and Judicious Men* were set to work for the Composure of some *small Tracts* of this Nature; and as an Appendix to the whole, that there might be a *Summary* of the *Most Virtuous* and *Infamous Actions* of *Former Times*, with the *Rewards* and *Punishments* they have received from God and Just Government: that by the Power of *Example* they may be deterr'd from *Vice*, and provoked to an *Honest Emulation* of the *Virtues* and *Reputation* of the *Antients*.

(4.) In the *Fourth* place, *Cross not* the Genius of your Youth, Match their *Talents* well; for if ye do not fute their *Studies* to their *Understandings*, it will be *Drawing up Hill*, *Going against the Grain* or *Swimming against the Tide*: that which will be gain'd, will be little; and with so much *Labour* and *Time* too, as will
not

not quit Cost. It should be greatly the Care of those, who have the Charge of *Youth*, to make the Wayes of *Learning* *Easie* and *Chearful*; which leadeth me to —

(5.) My Last Observation: *Let all Honest Arts, be used by Masters of Schools to provoke their Youth to Learning without much Fierceness or Beating: For that Sort of Education has nothing of the Free and Generous Disposition in it, which might be raised and improved in Youth by more Gentle and Reasonable Methods. They that are taught to obey only for Base Fear, make that Fear and not Reason the Rule of their Obedience; and this grows in too many with their Age, that they turn meer Mercenaries and worship Violence. In short, Make Instruction Easie, Correction Reasonable: Convince them of their Miscarriage with Mildness, then Pardon them; and finally excite them to Amendment by Smiles and Favour. This awakens the Noble Part and excites Youth to effect that, which may ingratiate them with their Tutors; who, if they at any time commit an Error, should rather shew themselves affectionately Sorry for them, than bitterly Angry. Plato being greatly displeased with his Servant, and going about to Correct him, gave the Wand to one that stood by, saying: Do thou beat him; for I am Angry. Chastisement should be used with Reason and Reluctancy: a Discreet and Cool Hand may direct the Blow right and hit the Mark; when Men of Fury rather ease their Passion, than mend their Youth: especially, if the Correction exceed the Fault; for that hardens: This very Brutishness is more Injurious to the Nature of our Youth, than usually their Instruction is beneficial.*

Upon the whole Matter I take the Boldness to say, That if we would *Preserve* our *Government*, we must endear it to the People. To do this (besides the necessity of present *Just* and *Wise things*) we must *Secure* the *Youth*: and this is not to be done but by the Amendment of the *Way* of their *Education*, and that with all Conceivable Speed and Diligence: I say, the *Government* is Highly oblig'd: it is a sort of *Trustee* for the *Youth* of the Kingdom, though now *Minors*, yet will have the *Government*, when we are gone. Therefore depress *Vice* and cherish *Virtue*, that through good *Education* they may become *Good*; which will truly render them *Happy* in this World, and a Good *Way* fitted for that which is to come. If this be done, they will owe more to your *Memories* for their *Education*, than for their *Being*.

My *THIRD* and *Last Reason* for this *Serious Supplication* to the *Civil Magistrate* is so Great, that I find Difficulty to express it: 'Tis the *GLORY* of that *GOD*, that *Made* us, that hath so often *Deliver'd* us, and doth so plentifully provide for us; who *sent his Son into the World* to *Save* us, and waits every Day to be *Good* and *Gracious* to us. But he hath so particularly and with that *Transcendency* set the Marks of his *Favour* upon you, both in your *Restoration* and *Protection*, as scarce any Age can parallel: O! Let a *Steady Virtue* be the Return of these *Mercies*, and a *Pious Care* to Retrieve and Encourage *Morality* (the very *Basis* of our *Government*) be the *Humble Token* of your *Gratitude*! It is your Office; ye *do't* but comply with the *Reason* of your own *Institution*: God expects it and Good Men

Men beseech it from you. There is much in your Power at this time, to make this the ISLAND OF PEACE AND LASTING TRANQUILLITY. Lose not the Present Opportunity: Revive the Laws against these Gross Iniquities; terrifie all Evil-Doers, Cherish them that do well. Provide for the Poor, that their Stock may not be Abus'd, nor their Cries pierce Heaven against you because of Neglect; and God may yet Vouchsafe to spare us.

Your Sins (said God of Old) have with-held Good Things from you: 'tis Righteousness that exalts a Nation; but Sin is the Reproach of any people. Would ye Prosper? then please God; and if ye will please him, ye must put away the Wicked from amongst you. It was both his Complaint and the Cause of his Judgment in Former Ages: There are found Wicked Men among my people, they lay wait, as he that setteth Snares; they set a Trap, they catch Men: as a Cage is full of Birds; so are their Houses full of Deceit. Therefore they are become Great and waxen Rich; they are waxen Fat, they shine. They OVERPASS or OVERLOOK the Deeds of the Wicked, they Judge not the Cause of the Fatherless; yet they prosper. These were no Small Folks, but Men of Power, such as got largely by the Government, and employed their Authority to Enrich themselves, and not to relieve the Oppressed. I must needs say (and can with great Truth) That Mis-government is the Occasion, though the Devil be the Cause of that Mischief and Ruin; that attends Nations.

What Kingdoms hath God destroyed, and Cities turn'd into Rubbish, because of National Evils too much occasioned by the Remissness of Magistrates? the
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slack Hand, that the Rulers of Israel held over that *Unhappy* people, made Way for their Unsubjected Passions and Corrupt Affections to break out into *most Vile Impieties*: but if Men shall be left to their own *Licentiousness*, to *Commit Sin with Greediness*, and with Impunity both despise the *Laws of God and Men*, all I can say is this; "God, who is *Jealous* of his Glory, the "Great *Avenger* of his Law upon *Rebellious Nations*, "will with-hold his *Mercies*, and hasten his *Judgments* "upon us!

Hear the Word of the Lord (said the Prophet Hosea) ye Children of Israel; for the Lord hath a
 Hos. 4. Controversie with the Inhabitants of the Land: by
 1, 2, 3. Swearing, and Lying, and Killing, and Stealing and Committing Adultery they break out, and Blood touches Blood; therefore shall the Land mourn. And by the Prophet Malachi God threatens that people
 Mal. thus: I will come near to you, and I will be a swift
 3. 5. witness against Sorcerers, and against the Adulterers, and against False Swearers and such as fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts. Yea, to that Degree was that Magistracy degenerated, that they thought it a *Vain Thing* to serve God, to keep his Commandments: They called the Proud *Happy*; yea they that *workt Wickedness*, were *set up* (they were Advanced to Places of Honour and Trust) and they that tempted God, were deliver'd: But the Word of the Lord was unto them a *Reproach*; they had no Delight in it: They made a Mock at Sin, laid Snares for the Innocent, and (*like us*) made Men *Offenders for a Word*, for a good Word, a Word of *Reproof* or an *Harmless Opinion*. Well but what followed? Shall I not visit for these things,

things, saith the Lord: shall not my Soul be Avenged on such a Nation as this? Truly, 'tis our very Case; the same Impieties are daily found amongst us: Certainly God is offended, his Spirit grieved, and Heaven is set against us. For the Lord's sake, Do your Duty in this present Conjunction, and mistake not your Measures: Let every thing have its Due Weight and Place with you; that is the Way to Succeed. Ye are now Warmly concern'd in the Discovery and Prosecution of a Jesuitical Plot (a Design (it seems) to Destroy the King, and blow up your Religion and Wrest the Government out of your Hands) in this doubtless ye do well; and all Just Care to preserve the Peace of the Kingdom from such Mischievous Conspiracies, is Most Commendable in you, and deserves and draws all Due Acknowledgments from Honest and English Minds. But I beseech you, Let God have a share in your Concern; Remember him as well as Your selves: Ye confess, this Great Discovery is only owing to his Goodness; Shall we be then more Zealous for our own Safety, than for his Glory? who, when all is done, must Save us or we are Lost. Let us make him our Friend, who is stronger, than the Combinations of all our Enemies; and guard our selves against that which can only bring their EVIL DEVICES to pass, OUR SIN: for that is their Strength and the Poison of their Arrows; let us Confess and Forsake it; let us Humble our selves under the Mighty Hand of God, that it may not Grind us to Powder. And truly, if our hearts were not harder than Adamant's this Testimony he has given us of his Care over us (notwithstanding all our repeated Provocations given him) should break us into deep Contrition. O! let his Long-suffering

suffering prevail upon us to *Unfeigned Repentance* ! then shall we stand *Clear Men* before God ; and if so, he will quickly make our *Enemies* to fly before us. If there be any Truth in *Sacred Story*, any Credit to be given to *Christian Religion* or the *Experience* of Ages, this, that I say of God and Government is True ; it is our *Duty*, yea, our *Interest*, the truest and easiest Way to *Safety* : for God has decreed, *The Nation and Kingdom, that will not serve him, shall perish, yea, those Nations shall be utterly wasted* (Isa. 60. 12.) But *Great is their Peace, that Love this Law ; It shall go well with the Righteous, but it shall go ill with the Wicked* : upon them God hath threatned to *Rain Snares, Difficulties, Perplexities* ; they shall not know, which way to turn. I am not against the Use of *Means* : Men have not *Wisdom* and *Power* for nothing ; but then let them use them in the *Fear* and *Name* of God : *Cursed is he that putteth his Strength in Man, and his Confidence in the Arm of Flesh*. And in another place : *wo to them, that go down to Egypt for Help, and stay* Isa. 31. *on Horses and trust in Chariots, because they are* 1, 3. *many ; and in Horsemen, because they are very strong : but they look not to the Holy One of Israel, neither seek the Lord*. 'Twas his Reproof to the Nation that professed him, That they should seek to the *Stratagems*, and rely upon the *Strength* of *Heathen Nations*, rather than upon *Faith* in him, the *Living God* : and the Reason he gives (in the third verse) is great, viz. *The Egyptians are Men and not God, and their Horses Flesh, and not Spirit : when the Lord shall stretch out his Hand, both he that helpeth, shall fall, and he that is holpen, shall fall down, and they all shall fail together*. If then

then the Hand of God be so much stronger than Man, for the Lord's sake, let us lay hold of it; let that fight our *Battels* and decide the *Controversie*: He that trusteth to the Lord, shall never be confounded. It was the saying of a Great King and a Great Conqueror, *By thee I have leaped over a Wall, by thee I have run through a Troop, &c.* who preserved the *Israelites* from *Pharaoh's Fury*, threw down the *walls* of *Jericho*, when the *Priests* blew or sounded the *Rams-horns*; with more of the like kind. And we must not think, that God is alter'd, that *Faith* is weaken'd, that no *Wonders* are reserved for the *Latter* and *Christian Ages*. The Truth is, that *Faith* (generally speaking) is lost, and that *holy Confidence* now a days is esteem'd *Presumption*; 'tis become a *Principle*, that *such things are not to be expected*: so that we shut up or bar from our selves the True and most-Powerful way of *Deliverance*. Let us not betake our selves to the *Common Arts* and *Stratagems* of *Nations* Incredulous of the Strength of the God of *Israel*, who is the God of *True Christians* too. O! that our *Faith* may be greater than our *Arms*! no matter for the *Strength* of our *Enemies*, if God be our *Strength*: and truly, 'tis vain to acknowledge a *Providence* in *Humane Things*, and not to confide in him and rely upon him, that provides for us. *I was Young* (said *David*) *and now I am Old, but I never saw the Righteous forsaken, nor his Seed begging Bread*: It shall go well with the *Righteous*. Therefore fear God, put away the Evil that provokes him, and trust not in *Man*, but in the *Living God*; and it shall yet go well with *England*.

What Noble Feats did the Ancients do by FAITH!

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and shall *Christians* have less than *Jews* had? Is not *God* the same? yes; he is *Un-Changeable*: but *Alas!* we are not the same; that's our *Mischief*. *Christ* did not many *Mighty Works* in some places, because they believed not in him: if our *Confidence* be not in *God*, our *Hopes* will prove *Vain*, and our *Success* will fail us. We shall but have *MEN* of our side, not *God*; *Flesh* and not *Spirit*: and if we should be so *Unhappy*, as to make this our *Strength*, both the *Helpers* & *Helped* will fall together. But let *Nineve* teach us better things, and may her *Zealous King* be the Example of ours: and let all the people say *Amen!* The *Suitableness* of which Story to our present Occasion makes me chuse to End this *First Part* of my *Address* with it.

For Word came unto the King of Nineveh; Yet Forty Dayes, and Nineve shall be Overthrown. And he Arose from his Throne, and he laid his Robe from him, and covered him with Sack-cloth, and sate in Ashes. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published through Nineve (by the Decree of the King and his Nobles) saying; Let neither Man nor Beast, Herd nor Flock taste any thing; let them not feed, nor drink Water. But let Man and Beast be covered with Sack-cloth, and cry mightily unto God: yea. LET THEM TURN EVERY ONE FROM HIS EVIL WAY, and from the Violence, that is in their Hands. who can tell, if God will turn and repent, and turn away from his Fierce Anger, that we perish not. And God saw their Works, that they turn'd from their Evil Way; and God repented from the Evil, that he had said, that he would do unto them, and he did it not.

O God, thou that workest Wonders
 in the Earth, whose Power cannot be
 Controld, in whose Hands are the Souls
 of Men and the Spirits of all Flesh, who
 canst turn them in a Moment! Turn
 thou the Hearts of King and People un-
 to thee, and One unto another. Do
 thou proclaim a **FAST FROM**
SIN throughout these Sinful King-
 doms; let Wickedness and Oppres-
 sion find no place among us. Turn a-
 way thy Fierce Wrath, Wipe away our
 Reproach and Love us Freely, O God,
 for thy dear Son's sake!

THE
SECOND PART
OF THE
Address to Protestants
UPON THE
Present Conjunction.

HAVING then finish'd the *First Part* of my Address relating to the *Immoralities* of the *Times*, and left it with the CIVIL MAGISTRATE (as in Conscience I found my self Oblig'd to do) whose *Peculiar Charge* it is, and (I Earnestly and Humbly desire and pray, that it may be his) Great Care Effectually to Rebuke them; I shall betake my self to the *Second Part* of this Address, that more immediately concerns us as *Protest Christians* and *Protestants*. But before I begin, I desire to premise (and can with much *Sincerity* Declare) that I intend not the *Reproach* of any *Person* or *Party*: I am weary with seeing so much of it in the *World*: for it gains nothing, that is worth keeping; but *hardens* to a *Desperateness*, what 'tis our Duty to endeavour to *soften*. But if without Offence I may speak the Truth, that which to the best of my Understanding tends to the *Present Settlement* and *Future Fecundity* of my Poor Country; I shall (by God's Help) de-

desire my self wish that *Modesty, Plainness and Integrity*, that becomes a *Real Christian* and a *True English-Man*.

Those *Capital Sins and Errors*, that relate to the **EC-CLESIASTICAL STATE** or Church-Capacity of these Kingdoms, and which are so Inconsistent with *Christian Religion* and purest *Protestancy*, and that above all displease Almighty God, are —

First, *Making Opinions Articles of Faith, at least giving them the Reputation of Faith, and making them the Bond of Christian Society.*

Secondly, *Mistaking the Nature of True Faith, and taking that for Faith, which is not Gospel-Faith.*

Thirdly, *Debasing the true Value of Morality under pretence of Higher Things, mistaking the very End of Christ's Coming.*

Fourthly, *Preferring Humane Authority above Reason and Truth.*

Fifthly, *Propagating Faith by Force and Imposing Religion by Worldly Compulsion.*

These I take to be those *Church Evils*, that have too much infected even these Parts of the (reputed) *Reformed World*. And though the *Roman Church* for the most part hath transcended all other *Societies* in these *Errors* (and may in a sense be said to be the *Mother* of them, She from whom they took *Birth*, by whom they were brought forth and propagated in *Christendom*) yet there hath not been that *Integrity* to the *Nature of Christianity*, and *First Reason* of *Reformation* from

Papacy in our own Country, as had been and is our Duty to conserve.

First, *In that* Opinions pass for Faith, and are made Articles of Faith, and enjoyn'd to be embrac'd as the Bond of Communion.

That this is so, let us take the most *impartial View* we can, and we shall find it to be true, both of the *National* and many other *Select Societies*. That I may be understood in the Signification of the word *OPINIONS*, I explain it thus: "Opinions are all those Propositions or Conclusions made by Men Doctrines of Faith and Articles of Communion, which either are not Expressly laid down in Scripture, or not so evidently Deduceable from Scripture, as to leave no Reason of Doubt in their Minds of the Truth of them, who sincerely and reverently believe the Text: or lastly such, as have no New or Credible Revelation to avouch them."

That this is our Case, let the several *Confessions of Faith* published by almost every *Party* in *England* be perused, and ye will find such *Propositions* translated into *Doctrines of Faith* and *Articles of Communion*, as are (*First*) not only not Express'd in Scripture, but perhaps not Deduceable from Scripture. If one *Party* may be but believ'd against another, this will want no Evidence to prove the Point. And (in the *Next* place) such as are (though not Express, yet it may be) Deduceable as to the Matter of them, but either carried so high, spun so fine or so disguised by *Barbarous School-Terms*, that they are rather a Bone of Contention, than a Bond of Concord to Religious Societies. Yet this has been

been the Unhappiness even of this Kingdom after all the Light of *Reformation*, which God hath graciously sent amongst us, *Men are to be received or rejected for denying or owning of such Propositions.* Wilt thou be an *Episcopalian*? then Sign the *Thirty-Nine Articles*, Renounce the *Covenant* and Conform to the Discipline and *Jurisdiction* of the Church. Wilt thou be a *Presbyterian*? Embrace and Keep the *Covenant*, subscribe the *Westminster-Confession* and *Directory*: and so on to the End of every *Society*, that grounds Communion upon *Conformity* to such *Propositions* and *Articles*.

What a Stir have we had in *England* about the poor word *Episcopos*! He that says, it signifies an *Higher Office* than *Presbiteros*, shall have no part or fellowship with us: On t'other hand, they that will debase *Episcopos* to *Presbyteros* and turn *Levellers* of *Episcopal Dignity*, shall be *Excommunicated*, *silenc'd*, *punish'd*. Is not this *Fact*? can any deny it, that love Truth more than a *Party*? The Fire kindled by this *Contention*, hath warm'd the Hands of *Violence*: It had been well, if Men had entertain'd *Equal Zeal* against *Impiety*, and been but half asmuch *Enemies* to the Sin, as they have been against one another.

If we look a little back, we shall find, that the Debate of *Free-will* & *Unconditional Reprobation* fill'd this Kingdom with *Incharitableness* and *Division*. In the Arch-Episcopacy of *Abbot* (reputed in himself a *Good Man*) who ever held, that Christ died so for *all Men*, that *all men might be saved* (if they would accept the *Means*) and that none were absolutely decreed to *Eternal Reprobation*, was near akin to *Heretic*, and *Excommunicated* as an *Enemy* to the *Free Grace* of God, which, it seems, lay in being *Narrow*.

In the time of Arch-Bishop *Land* the Tide turns: those that hold an *Absolute Election* and *Reprobation* without regard had to the *Good or Evil Actions* of Men, and assert, that *Christ only died for the Elect*, and not for all; must be discountenanc'd, displac'd and pointed at as *Men out of Fashion*, though at the same time *Conscientious, Sober* and (at worst) *Mistaken*, to be pittied rather than prosecuted, and informed rather than confounded.

This Controversie begot the *Synod of Dort*: he that reads the *Epistles* of that Judicious man *J. Hails* of *Eaton* upon the Matter and Conduct of the *Assembly*, will find cause of being sad at Heart; too many of them talk'd of *Religion* without the *Spirit* of it. Men perhaps *Learned* in Books, but few of the *Sticklers* gave any great Testimony of their Proficiency in that *Science*, which is first *pure*, then *peaceable*, *gentle* and *easie to be entreated*. This Flame (kindled between *Arminius* and *Episcopius*, &c. for the *Remonstrants*; and *Gomarus*, *Sibrandus*, &c. for the *Predestinarians*) distracted *Holland* not a little, and had an *ill Influence* upon the *Affairs* of *England*, at least so far, as concern'd the *Church*. But the Mournfullest part of that History is, the Ill Usage *Martinus Crocius* the Bishop of *Landaff* and others had: who though they were acknowledged to be *Sound* in the *Faith* of those Times (which generally followed the Judgment of *Calvin*, as to the *mean points* controverted) yet if at any time they appear'd moderate in their Behaviour, gentle in their Words and for *Accommodation* in some particulars with the *Remonstrators* or *Free-willers*; *Gomarus* and his Followers not observing that Gravity of the *Assembly*, the Rules of *Debate*, and least of all the Meekness

Meekness of *Christian Communion*, sell soul of their Brethren, reproach'd their Tenders, and began to fix Treachery upon their *Sister Endeavours* of *Accommodation*; as if they intended to execute as well as maintain their *Reprobation*, and blow up their *Friends* rather, than not destroy their *Adversaries*.

But if we will yet rise higher in our Enquiry, and view the *Mischiefs* of *Earlier Times*, the *Fourth* and *Fifth Centuries* after Christ will furnish us with *Instances* enough. We cannot possibly forget the *Heavvy Life*, some men made about the Observation of *Easter Day*, as if their *Eternal Happiness* had been in *Jeopardy*; for so far were they degenerated from the *Love and Meekness of Christianity*, that about keeping of a *Day* (which perhaps was no part, but to be sure, no *Essential part* of the *Christian Religion*) they fell to pieces, reproach'd, revil'd and hated one another. A *Day* was more than *Christ*, who was the *Lord and End of Days*, and *Victory* over Brethren better, than the *Peace and Concord* of the *Church*, the *Great Command of Jesus*.

But the Remarkable and Tragical Story of *Alexander Bishop of Alexandria* and *Arius* his Priest, in their known Debate about the *Nature and Existence* of the *Son of God*, with the lamentable *Consequences* thereof, (as all Writers upon that *Subject* have related) witnesseth to the truth of what I say. The Bishop's *Curiosity*, & the *Niceness* of *Arius*, the *Presumption* of the one to expound beyond the *Evidence and Simplicity* of the *Text*, and the *Captious Humor* of the other, that would not bate the Bishop any thing for his *Age* or the *Rank*

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he held in the Church; but Logically, exacted the *Utmost* Forbearing of the Reekoning, began the *Pray*. Which, as it became the *Perplexity* of Church and State some Ages, so it raged to *Blood*; and those that had been persecuted like *Sheep* by the *Heathen* not long before, turn'd *Wolves* now to each other, and made sport for the *Infidel*, doing their work. Nay so much more *Christian* was *Themistius* the *Philosopher*, that in his *Oration* (called *CONSUL*) he commended and advised the Emperour *Jovianus* to *Exercise Moderation*, and to give that *Liberty of Conscience*, which profess *Christians* refused to do to each other: who seem'd to think, they never did God better Service, than in *Sacrificing* one another for Religion.

Did we duly reflect upon the *Unnatural Heats*, *Divisions* and *Excommunications* among them, the many *Councils* that were called, the strong and tedious *Debates* held, the *Translations* of *Sees*, the *Anathemas*, the *Banishments*, *Wars*, *Sackings*, *Fires* and *Blood-shed* that followed this *Unnatural Division*, that sprang from so nice a *Controversie*; one would verily believe no less, than that Religion it self had been in *Utmost Hazard*: that *Judaism* or *Paganism* were over-running Christianity; and not, that all this Stir had been made about an *Iota*: For the whole Question was, whether *HOMOTISIA* or *NOMOTISIA* should be received for Faith? in which the difference is but the single Letter [I] Certainly, we must do Violence to our Understanding, if we can think, that these men were Followers of that Jesus, that Lov'd his Enemies & gave his Blood for the World; who hated their Brethren and shed

shed one anothers Blood for OPINIONS: The *Heathen-Philosophers* never were so *Barbarous* in their Differences.

But how easily might all these *Confusions* have been prevented, if their *Faith* about *Christ* had been deliver'd in the *Words* of *Scripture*; since all sides pretend to believe the *Text*? and why should any man presume to be *Wiser* than the *Holy Ghost*? 'Tis strange, that *God* and *Christ* should be wanting to express or discover their own mind! or that the words used by the *Holy Ghost*, should have that Shortness, Ambiguity or Obliguity in them, that our *frail Capacities* should be needed to make them more *Easie*, *Proper* and *Intelligible*! But that we should scarcely deliver any one *Article* of *Faith* in *Scripture-Terms*, and yet make such *Alls* the *Rule* and *Bond* of *Christian Communion*, 'is in my Judgment an Offence hainous against *God* and *Holy Scripture*, and very *Injurious* to *Christian Charity* and *Fellowship*. Who can express any *Man's* mind so fully, as himself? and shall we allow that *Liberty* to our selves, and refuse it to *God*? *The Scrip.* 2 *Pet.* 1. 21. *tures came not in Old time* (said the *Apostle Peter*) *by the will of Man*, but *holy Men of God* *speak*, as they were moved by the *Holy Ghost*. Who can speak better or express the *Mind* of the *holy Ghost* plainer, than the *holy Ghost*? the *Scripture* is the *Great Record* of *Truth*, that which all these *Parties* in *Controversie* agree, to be the *Declared Mind and Will* of *God*, they *Unanimously* say, *It ought to be believ'd and profess'd as such*. If this be true, in what *Language* can we so safely and properly declare our *Belief* of the *Truths* therein

therein contain'd, orexpreis those Truths, as in the very *Language* of the *Scripture*?

And I cannot see, how those Persons can be excused in the *Day of God's Judgement*, who make men *Heterodox* or *Heresical* for refusing to subscribe their *Articles of Faith*, that are not in *Scripture-Terms*, who at the same time offer to declare their Belief of *God, Christ, Spirit, Man's Laps or Fall, Repentance, Sanctification, Justification, Salvation, Resurrection* and *Eternal Recompence* in the *Language of Holy Scripture*? 'Tis preposterous and a *Contradiction*, that those, who desire to deliver their *Faith of Truth* in the *Language of Truth*, should not be reputed *True Believers*, nor their *Faith* admitted: for this were to say, that therefore their *Faith* is not to be receiv'd, because it is declared in the *Language* of that very *Truth*, which is the *Object* of that *Faith*, for which it ought to be received, and which is on all hands concluded to be our *Duty to believe*. It seems then, we must not express our *Belief* of *God* in his *Words*; but our own; nor is the *Scripture* a *Creed* plain or proper enough to declare a *True Believer* or an *Orthodox Christian*.

Are not things come to a sad pass, that to refuse any other *Terms*, than those the *Holy Ghost* has given us, and which are confess'd to be the *Rule* or *Form of sound Words*, is to expose a Man to the *Censure* of being *Unsound* in the *Faith* & unfit for *Christian-Communion*? Will nothing do, but *Man's Comment* instead of *God's Text*? his *Consequences & Conclusions* in the room of *Sacred Revelation*? I cannot see, how any Man can be oblig'd to receive or believe revealed Truths in any other *Language*

Language, than that of the Revelation itself, especially if those that vary the *Expression*, have not the same *Spirit* to lead them in doing so, or that it appears not to me, that they have the *Guidance* of that *holy Spirit*. If the *holy Ghost* hath left *Doubts* in *Scripture* (which is yet irreverent to believe) I see not how *Men* can resolve them, 'tis the *Work* of that *Spirit*. And since *Men* are so apt to Err, *Doubts* are better left in *Scripture*, than by us. But it is to cross that Order of *Prudence* and *Wisdom* among *Men*, who chuse to Conform their *Expressions* to the things they believe. If any honest Man hath related a *Story* to me of something he hath seen, and I am to declare my *Faith* about it, if I believe the *Fact*, I will chuse to deliver it in the *Terms* of the *Relator*, as being nearest to the *Truth*.

Suppose a Father dying makes his *Last will* and *Testament*, and (as he thinks) so plain, that there can be no *Mistake* made by the *Executors*, but what is wilful: if they instead of proving this *Will* and acting according to the plainness of it, turn *Commentators*, make more *Difficulties* than they find, and perplex the *whole Matter* to the *Children* and *Legatees*, and send them to the *Law* for their *Right*; will we not esteem such *Executors* ill *Men*, and justify those Persons concern'd in their *Refusal* of the *Paraphrase*? God hath at sundry times and in divers manners by his *Prophets*, his *Beloved Son* and his *Apostles* deliver'd to the *World* a *Declaration* of his *Will* and *Testament*; but some have claim'd and taken to themselves the *Keeping*, *Explanation* and *Use* of it: so as those, that chuse to be concluded by the *Letter* and *Text* of this *Testament* in its most important *Points*, expose themselves to great prejudice; for they

they are excommunicated from all other share in it, than the *punishment* of the *Breakers* of it, which is part of their *Anathema*, who of all others are most guilty of *Adding* or *Diminishing*, by undertaking to determine (for others as well as themselves) the *Mind* and *Intention* of the *holy Ghost* in it.

But if it be true (as true it is) that few have writ of the *Authority* of *Scripture*, that do not affirm, the very *Penmen* of it to be not only *inspired by the Holy Ghost*, but so *extraordinarily acted* by him, as that they were wholly asleep to their own *Will*, *Desires* or *Affections*, like people taken out of themselves, and purely *Passive* (as *Clay* in the hand of the *Potter*) to the *Revelation*, *Will* and *Motion* of the *Spirit*, and for this End, that nothing deliver'd by them might have the least *Possibility* of *Mistake*, *Error* or *Imperfection*, but be a *Compleat Testament* of the *Will* of *God* to men; I cannot see which way such Men can excuse themselves from *Great Presumption*, that will notwithstanding have the *Wording* of *Creeds* of *Communion*, and reject that *Declaration* of *Faith* as *insufficient* which is deliver'd in the very *Terms* of the *Holy Ghost*, and deny those Persons to be *Members* of *Christ's Church*, that in *Conscience* refuse to subscribe any other *Draught*, than their Lord has given them.

Two things oppose themselves to this Practice: *First*, The *Glory* of *God* & the *Honor* of the *Scriptures*; for it naturally draws people from the *Regard Due* to *God* & the *Scriptures* & begits too much *Respect* for *Men* & their *Traditions*. This was the *Difficulty* *Christ* met with and complained of in his time; they had set up so many *Rabbies* to learn them *Religion*, that the *Lord* of the *True Religion*

Religion could hardly find a place amongst them. And what did they do? *They taught for Doctrines the Traditions of Men*: They gave their own and their Predecessors *Apprehensions, Constructions and Paraphrases* upon Scripture for the *Mind and Will of God*, the *Rule of the Peoples Faith*. They were got near at this pass in the *Church of Corinth*, when they cryed out, *I am for Paul, I am for Apollo, and I am for Cephas*, though they had not the same Temptation.

And that which followed then, ever will follow in the like Case, and that is **DISTRACTION**; which is the Contrary to that *Second* thing, that opposeth it self to this *Practice*, and that is the *Concord of Christians*. For *Peace's* sake consider it, *Lo here* and *Lo there* always follow'd; one of this mind, and another of that: *As many Sects as Great Men to make and Head them*. This was the Case of the *Jews*, and yet I do not hear, that they devour'd one another about their *Opinions* and *Commentaries* upon Scripture: but the *Christians* have done both, *Divided* and *Persecuted* too. *First*, they have *Divided*, and that mostly upon the score of *Opinions* about Religion: they have not been Contented with the Expressions of the *holy Ghost*; they liked their own better. And when they were set up in the *Room of Scripture*, and in the *Name of Scripture*, **SUBMISSION** was required upon pain of *worldly Punishments*: This dissatisfied *Curiosity*, this *Unwarrantable* (what shall I say?) this *wanton Search* has cost *Christendom* dear, and poor *England* of any part of it.

I design not to grate upon any to revive old *Stories* or search old *Wounds* or give the least *Just Occasion* of *Displeasure* to those that are in *Present Power*: yet I must

must needs say, that *Opinion* on one side or t'other has been the cause of much of that *Discord*, *Animosity* and *Confusion*, that have troubled this Kingdom. And it seems to have been the *great Stratagem* of Satan to prevent the spreading of the *Glorious Gospel* of *Salvation* in the World, by taking men off from the serious pursuit of *Piety* and *Charity*, *Humility* and *holy Living*, *Peace* and *Concord*; and under pretence of more *raised Apprehensions* and sublime Knowledge of *Religion* to put them upon introducing *Curious* and *Doubtful Questions*, that have given occasion for *Contention* and *Persecution*. This was no more uncondemned, than

1 Tim. 6. unforseen of the Apostle Paul who exhorted his beloved Son Timothy, To avoid
3, 4, 5.

those that doted about Questions (those Men, that would be thought *Skilful*, *Inquisitive Searchers* after Truth, such as love to exercise their *Faculties* and improve their *Talents*, but let us hear his Judgment) of which (says he) cometh *Strife*, *Railing*, *Surmises*, *perverse Disputings* of men of *Corrupt Minds*. And the truth is, none else love such *Disputings*; they, who seek a daily *Victory* over the *World*, the *Flesh* and the *Devil*, and press fervently after *Fellowship* with God and that *Consolation*, that ensues such an *Employment* of their time, have very little to lose upon *Contention* about Words. I could wish I were able to say, that *Vain Controversie* were not our Case! But this is not all, the Apostle does expressly tell Timothy, that if any man consent not to wholsom Words, even the Words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Doctrine, that is according to *Godliness*, he is Proud, knowing nothing, but doting about Questions, &c. such as used *Philosophy*

and

and *vain Deceit* (as he writes to the *Colossians*) Col. 2.8. Beware, says he, lest any man spoil you through *Philosophy and vain Deceit*, [that is, draw them away from the *Simplicity* of the Gospel and the *wholsome Words* of Christ] after the *Traditions of men*, after the *Rudiments of the world*, and not after Christ. He used no *humane Wisdom*, yet he spake *Wisdom*, but it was in a *Mystery*, not to the humble Disciples of *Jesus*; nothing was plainer: but it was a *Mystery* to the *wise Men* of this world. And truly, they that are not unacquainted with the more degenerate Ages of the *Greek Philosophers*, how *Philosophy* (once taken for the Love of *Virtue* and *Self-Denial*, which they esteem'd truest *Wisdom*, and was begun by men of *Ordinary Rank*) became little else, than an *Art of Rangling* upon a multitude of *Idle Questions*, and so they entertain'd the *Apostle Paul* at *Athens*) may very well guess, which way *Apostacy* entred among Christians; especially, when we consider, that in the third and fourth Centuries the *Heathen-Philosophers* had the *Education* of the *Christian Youth*, and that no man had any Reputation among the *Christian Doctors*, who were not well *Initiated* in the *Philosophy*, *Rhetorick* and *Poetry* of the *Gentiles*. Which made way for *Impurity of Language*, and laid a Foundation for great *Feuds* in the Church; Christ and his Doctrine must be prov'd by *Aristotle* and his *Philosophy*. Yes, *Aristotle* must explain *Scripture*, and by Degrees *Methodize* the loose *Parts* of it, and reduce them to *Formal Propositions*, *Axiomes*, and by the Help of such *Philosophers* the poor *Fisher-men* were taught to speak *Metaphysically*, and grew *Polite* in the *Sense of Athens*, that (to say true) had been neither

guilty of *Using* not *Understanding* it. But as the *First Rules* of *Philosophy* were few and plain, and consisted in *Virtuous Living*; so the *Christian Religion* was deliver'd with much Brevity, yet much Plainness, suited even to the Capacity of the *Young*, the *Ignorant* and the *Poor*, to inform their understandings, subdue their affections and convert their Souls to God, as well as Persons of more *Age*, *Knowledge* and *Ability*.

And truly, when we consider the *Smallness* of the *Writings* of the *Evangelists*, the *Shortness* of *Christ's Sermons*, the *Fewness* of the *Epistles* writ by the *Apostles*, and the *Many* and *Great Volumes* of *Commentators* and *Criticks*; we may justly say, The *Text* is almost *Lost* in the *Comment*, and *Truth* hid rather than revealed in these heaps of *fallible Apprehensions*. Where by the way let me say, that the *Voluminousness* of the *Books* is no small token of the *Unclearness* of the *Writers*; the more *Evident* and better digested any *Matter* is, the more *easie* and *short* it will be in expressing. But after the *Christians* had declin'd the *Simplicity* of their own *Religion*, and grew *Curious* and *Wanton*; *Loving God* above all, Their *Neighbours as themselves* and *Keeping the plain Commandments of Christ*, that relate to *good Life*, became but *Ordinary* and *Homely things*; their *Easiness* rendred them *Contemptible*. They gave but little pleasure to *Speculative Minds*; they had nothing in them above *Ordinary Capacities*: and it seem'd hard, that men of *Inquisitive* and *Rais'd Spirits* should sit down with the *Lesson* of *RUSTICKS* and *PEASANTS*: *Philosophers* did not do so, & they would be like other *Nations*: 'Twas not enough now to know, *There was a God*, and that he was but *One*, *Just* and

and Good, the Observer of their *Actions* and the Rewarder of their *Deeds*; and that therefore they should serve him: But they must be distinctly inform'd of his *Nature* and all his *Attributes*, his *Purposes* and his *Decrees*, and the *Suitableness* of them all to the *Line* and *Plumet* of their *Understandings*: So that God was to be, what their *Conclusions* would allow him to be; that yet knew not themselves, their own *Beings* and their *Extents*. Nor did it satisfy that there was a *Christ*, that this *Christ* was the *Son of God*, that God so loved Mankind, as beholding him in a way of *Defection*, he sent his *Son* to proclaim pardon upon true *Repentance*, and offer'd a *General Reconciliation* to as many as received and embrac'd his *Testimony*, and that to that End he laid down his *Life* a *Ransom*, *Rise* and *Ascended*, and gave his good *Spirit* to lead his Followers in the way of *Truth* and *Holiness*. But they must search into the Secret of this Relation, how and after what manner he is the *Son of God*? his *Nature*, *Power* and *Person* must be discuss'd; they will be satisfied in this, before they can find in their Hearts to believe in him. Next whether he be the Cause or the Effect of God's Love? what was that Prize he paid, that Ransom he gave? and how he died for us? if Properly and Strictly or Tropically and elegantly to satisfy the Justice of God? and whether God could or could not have Saved man an other way? if this Mercy were offer'd to all, or but some? and whether Acceptance and Repentance be with the Consent of the Creature, or by an Irresistible Grace? what Body he Rise & Ascended with? and what Bodies we shall have in the Resurrection, in Nature, Stature and Proportion? Lastly, what this Spirit is,

that comes from Christ? if it comes from God also? whether it be God, or an Inferior Minister? how it Exists? If a Person, in what Relation, Degree or Dignity it stands to the Father and Son? with abundance more of this Unreasonable Strain, flowing from the Ungovern'd and Restless minds of men. No man would be used by his Servant, as they serve God: he must wait our Leasure, before we will believe, receive and obey him; his Message is Obscure, we don't understand it; he must gratifie our Curiosity; we desire to be better satisfied with it, before we believe or deliver it; It comes not presently up to Mens's Understandings; 'tis too obscurely exprest, we will explain it and deliver it with more Caution, Clearness and Success, then it is deliver'd to us. Thus God's Revelation hath been scan'd and his Precepts examin'd, before Licens'd: Men would be wiser then God, more wary then the holy Ghost. Our Lord (it should seem) understood not, what a kind of Creature Man was; he wanted his Wisdom (belike) to admonish him of the Danger; or haply he thought not upon that Corruption, which should befall Mankind in these Latter Ages of the World: which might require the Abilities of Men to supply the Wants and Defects left by the Holy Ghost in the Wording of the Scripture.—— I wroug not this Practice, I render it not more Odious than it is; 'tis an Inexcusable piece of Presumption; that which debases the External Testimony of God and draws men off from that which is Eternal too. It introduces the Traditions of men in the Room of God's Records, and maketh their Judgement and Results the Rule of Christian Faith and Canons of Christ's Church. This is one of those Things, that made Rome so hateful

ful and her Yoke Intolerable to our Predecessors: Pretended Deductions from Scripture put in the Room of Scripture, with a Supersedeas to all Dissent upon never so Just a Ground of Dissatisfaction.

I beseech you Protestants by the Mercies of God and Love of Jesus Christ ratified to you in his most-precious Blood, FLY ROME AT HOME: Look to the Enemies of your own House. Have a care of this Presumption, carry it not too high; lay not Stress, where God has laid none, neither use his Royal Stamp to Authorize your Apprehensions in the Name of his Institutions.

I do not say, that men are never to Express their Minds upon any place of Scripture to Edification; there is a Christian Liberty not to be deny'd; but never to Articles of Faith, that ever ought to be in the Very Language of Holy Writ. Ye see, how the Contrary hath been the great Make-bate in all Ages, and the Impositions of such Opinions, the Priviledge of Hypocrites, but the Snare of many honest Minds; to be sure, the sad Occasion of Feuds and miserable Divisions. It was plainly seen, that by the many Disputes that rise from hence, Mens Wits were confounded with their matters, Truth was lost & Brotherhood destroyed; thus the Devil acted the Part both of Opponent and Defendant, and managed the Passions of both Parties to his End, which was DISCORD. And but too many were ready to perswade themselves from the Miscarriages on both sides, that nothing certain could be concluded about Religion: for it so fell out, that whilst men were perpetually wrangling and brawling about some one Opinion of Religion, the most Important Points

of Faith and Life were little regarded. So that a *Godly Man* was distinguish'd from an *Ungodly* by this one thing (let his *Life* have been almost, what it would) that he seem'd To maintain the *Opinions in Vogue*; and to abhor that *Doctrine*, which in some one or two Points might be reputed *H-retical*.

O! that we could but see how many and how great *Defeats Satan* hath given to the *Work of God* in the hearts of men! what *Desolations* he hath made by this one Evil **CONTROVERSIE**, begot of *Opinion* and used for it! and how few have *Contended for the Faith*, as it was once deliver'd to the *Saints*! he must be a *Man of Brass*, that could not chuse to weep at these *Calamities*! And truly I must desire to take leave sometimes to bewail this *broken Condition* of *Christendom*, and to bestow my *Tears* in secret upon these *Common Ruins*: And I beseech God Almighty with a *Soul sensibly touch't* with the *Mischiefs*, that naturally flow from this *Practise*, to *Awaken* you to a most *Speedy* and *Serious Consideration*, your *Present Standing* and **AMENDMENT** of that *Miscarriage* in this and all other points, that may concern your *Good* and his *Glory*. Put away *Wrath*! away with *Clamors*! away with *Arrogance* and *Impatience*! Let that *Holy Spirit of God*, which we in common profess to be the *Christians Guide*, have the *Ordering* of our *Understandings* in *Spiritual things*, lest *Ignorance* should mistake, *Interest* wrest or *Prejudice* pervert the *sense of God's Book*. For as too many are *Ignorant* of the *Divine Truth* through their own *Concupiscence* and *vile Affections* (that carry them away to the *Desire* of other things, and therefore easily mistake about *Nice* or *Obscure Masters*;) so there are
not

not a few, who come to *search* the *Scriptures* as with *Pre-possess'd Minds*, that are sorry to meet with a *Contradiction* to their own *Judgment* instead of being glad to find the *Truth*, and use their Wits to *Rack out another Sense*, than that which is *genuine*: which sort of men use the *Scripture* for its *Authority* not its *Sense* or *Truth*.

All this while the *Head* is set at work not the *Heart*; that which *Christ* most insisted upon, is least concerned in this sort of *Faith* and *Christianity*; and that is, **KEEPING HIS COMMANDMENTS**. For 'tis *Opinion*, not *Obedience*, *Notion* and not *Regeneration*, that such men pursue: This *Kind* of *Religion* leaveth them as bad as it finds them, and worse; for they have something more to be *proud* of. Here is a *Creed* indeed, but of what? the *Conclusions* of men? and what to do? to prove they *believe* in *Christ*; that (*it seems*) never made them. It had been happy for the *World* that there had been no other *Creeds*, than what he and his *Apostles* made and left. And it is not the least *Argument* against their being needful to *Christian Communion*, that *Christ* and his *Apostles* did not think so, who was not wanting to *declare the WHOLE COUNSEL of GOD* to the *Church*.

To *Conclude*, if ye desire *Peace*, *love Truth*, *seek Piety* and *hate Hypocrisie*, *Discord*, all those things called *Articles of Faith* and *Canons of the Church*, that are not to be found in *Express Terms* in *Scripture*, or so plainly *Authorized* by *Scripture*, as may with ease be discerned by every *Honest* and *Conscientious Person*. And in the Room of those *Numerous* and *Disputed Opinions*

nions (made the Bond of *External Communion*) let some Plain, General & Necessary Truths be laid down in *Scripture Terms*, and let them be few: which leads me to the Next point, and that is FAITH, generally mistaken in the very Nature of it.

The *Second Miſchief*, that is amongst us, is the *Misunderstanding* of the Nature of FAITH: Whence it comes to paſs, that men take that for Faith, which is not, and ſit down in a *Security pernicious* to their *Eternal Happineſs*. I ſhall briefly ſay ſomething, of what is not Faith, before I ſpeak of that, which appears to me to be Truly and Scripturally ſuch.

The Faith of our Lord Jeſu Chriſt is not only not believing mens Opinions and Determinations from the Sacred Text (of which I have ſo freely deliver'd my ſelf) but it is not meerly the Belief even of the things contain'd in Scripture to be True: For this the Devils & Hypocrites do, and yet very Bad Believers; they reſuſe not the Authority of Scripture. The Devil made Uſe of it to Chriſt himſelf; but he wou'd have the Explaining and Applying of it: and ſince he could not hinder the Divine Inſpiration, if he may but be allow'd the Expoſition, he hopes to ſecure his Kingdom. Since then the Verity & Authority of both Hiſtory and Doctrine may be believ'd by the Devil and Hypocrites, that are falſe to their own Faith and Knowledge; we cannot without great Injuſtice to the Faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, (which is the Faith of all his Followers) allow, That a meer Belief of the Verity and Authority of the Hiſtory and Doctrine of Scripture is that true and precious Faith.

Faith then in the Senſe of the holy Ghoſt is by the
) holy Ghoſt thus defined: viz. The Evidence of things

not seen and the Substance of things hoped for. Heb. 11. 1.

This is General and runs through all Ages;

but I shall express it thus: *True Faith in God, is entirely believing and trusting in God, confiding in his* Eph. 2. 8.

Goodness, resigning up to his Will, obeying his Law and relying upon his *Condol'd an Mercies respecting this Life and that to come.* This is in Scripture called

the Gift of God: and well it may, for it is Supernatural; It crosses the *Pride, Confidence and Lust of* Gal. 5. 6.

man: It grows out of the Seed of Love,

sown by God in the Heart; at least, *it works by Love:*

and this distinguishes it from the *Faith of Iſt Men and Devils;* that though they do believe, they don't *Love*

God above all, but something else instead of God, and are full of *Pride, Anger, Cruelty* and all manner of

Wickedness. But this *Faith that works by Love,* that *Divine Love,* which God plants in the Heart, it inclines

Man, and gives him *Power* to forsake all that displeaseth God: and every such *Believer* becomes an *Enach*

Translated, that is, *Changed* from the *Fashion* of this world, the *Earthly Image,* the *Corrupt Nature;* and is

renewed in the *Likeness* of the *Son of God* and walks with God. *The Just shall live by Faith;* they have Heb. 2. 4.

in all Ages liv'd by this *Faith;* that is, been

sustain'd, supported, preserved; the *Devil within* nor the *World without* could never conquer them. They

walked not by *Sight,* but by *Faith;* they had regard to the *Eternal Recompense:* No *Visible things* prevailed

with them to depart from the *Invisible God,* to quench their *Love* or slacken their *Obedience* to him, the *Great*

Testimony of their *Faith* in him. This *Holy Faith* excludes no Age of the World; the *Just Men,* th-

Cornelius's in every Generation have had some degree of it: 'twas more especially the *Faith* of the *Simpler Ages* of the World, such as those, in whom the *Patriarchs* lived, who having not an *Outward Law*, became a *Law to themselves*, and did the things contained in the *Law*; for they believed in God, and through *Faith* obtained a good Report. But because that it hath pleased

God (in Order to *Man's Recovery* from that *Heb. x. i.* grievous Laps, *Disobedience* had cast him in- to) at sundry times and in divers manners to appear to the Sons of men, first, by his *Prophets*, and last of all by his *Son*; & that these several *Manifestations* have had something peculiar to them & very remarkable in them, so that they claim a place in our *Creed*; It will not be amiss, that we briefly consider them.

The first was that of the *Prophets*, in which *Moses* preceded, by whom the *Law* came to the *Jews*, but *Grace* and *Truth* to mankind by *Jesus Christ*. The first brought *Condemnation*, the last *Salvation*; the one *Judgment*, the other *Mercy*: which was glad Tidings indeed. The one did fore-run the other, as in Order of *Time*, so in Nature of *Dispensations*: the *Law* was the *Gospel* begun; the *Gospel* the *Law* fulfilled or finisht: They cannot be parted.

The *Decalogue* or *Ten Commandments* were little more, than what had been known and practised before; for it seem'd but an *Epitome* and *Transcript* of the *Law* writ in *Man's heart* by the *Finger of God*: This is confest on all hands and in all *Ages* since. This therefore must needs be a *Part* of our *Creed*; for it relates to that *Righteousness*, which is *Indispensible* and *Immutable*: The other part of their *Constitution* (that was

was peculiar to their *Politic, Typical and Mutable*, the Gospel is either Unconcerned in it, or else ended it by the bringing in of a more Enduring Substance. But Grace and Truth came by Jesus Christ: Grace is opposed to the Condemnation of the Law, and Truth to Shadows; This is the most-Excellent Dispensation; it is ours, and it becomes us to weigh well our Interest in it.

God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spoke in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken to us by his Son. For Heb. 1. 1.
 God so loved the World, that (after all the John 3.
 World's Provocations by Omissions and Com- 16, 17.
 missions) he gave his Only Begotten Son into the World, that the world through him might be saved.

And here Two Things present themselves to our Consideration: First, the Person, who he was? what his Authority? Secondly, his Message, his Doctrine, what he Taught: which though never so Reasonable in itself, depended very much in its Entertainment among the People upon the Truth of his Mission and Authority, that he was no Impostor, but came from God, the Promised Messiah. This was done Two ways; by Revelation and by Miracles. By Revelation, to such, as were as well prepared and inclined as honest Peter, the Woman of Samaria, and those that were mov'd to believe him from the Authority in which he spake so unlike that of the Formal Scribes. By Miracles, to those, that being blinded by Ignorance or Prejudice, needed to have their senses struck with such Supernatural Evidences: from many of whom this Witness came, that he was the MESSIAH, the Christ and SON of GOD.

In fine, all was done within the Compass of People, among whom he daily conversed, that was needful to prove; he was from God and had *God's Message* to declare to the World. Inſomuch that when ſome of his Diſciples were not ſo firm in their Belief of his *Authority*, as he deſerved at their hands; he calls his own *Works* to prove his *Commiſſion* and convict them of *Infidelity*: *If ye will not believe, that the Father is in*

me, that he doth theſe Works by me; believe me for the very Works ſake, Thus he argued with the Jews: *Say ye of him the Father both ſanctified and ſent into the World, thou blaſphem'eſt, becauſe I ſaid, I am the Son of*

God: if I do not the Works of my Father, believe me not (this is reaſonable; he that will Judge the world, offers to be Tryed himſelf; he goes on) *But if I do, though ye believe not me, believe the Works, that ye may know and believe, that the Father is in me.*

And he laid the *ſin* of the Jews upon this Foot, viz. That they rejected him, after he had made proof of his Divine Miſſion by ſuch

Extraordinary Works, As no men among them all could do: which (to give them their Due) they do not deny; but ſhamefully pervert and fooliſhly abuſe by attributing them to the Power of the Devil. To which Malice and Slander he returned this Inconfutable Answer; *A Kingdom divided againſt it ſelf, cannot ſtand: What! caſt out Devils by the Prince of Devils: 'tis a Contradiſtion, very Madneſs it ſelf.*

I have nothing to do now with *Atheiſts*, or thoſe that call themſelves *Theriſts*; but ſuch as own themſelves *Chriſtians*: and ſhall therefore keep to my *Task*, namely;

namely; *What of the Christian Dispensation is so Peculiar and Important, as to challenge of Right the Name of Articles of Faith?* I say then, *That the Belief of Jesus of Nazareth to be the Promis'd Messiah, the Son and Christ of God, sent to restore and save Mankind, is the first and was then the only requisite Article of Faith without any Large Confessions, or an Heap of Principles or Opinions resolv'd upon after Curious and Tedious Debates by Councils or Synods: and this may be proved both by Example and Doctrine.*

It is evident from *Example*, as in the Case of *Peter*, who for having believed in his heart and confess with his Mouth, *That JESUS was the Christ and SON of GOD*, obtained that *Signal Blessing*, *Mat. 16. 16, 17.* This made *Nathaniel* a *Disciple*; *Rabbi* (said he) *thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel.* It was the like *Confession*, that made amends for *Thomas's Incredulity*, when he was sensibly assured of the *Resurrection of Jesus, My Lord and my God.* This was also the Substance of *Martha's Confession of Faith to Jesus*, when he said to her; *I am the Resurrection and the Life; he that believeth in me shall never dye: believest thou this?* She answered; *Yea, Lord, I believe, that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the World?* She answered him not as to that Particular of the *Resurrection*; but in General, *that he was the Christ, the MESSIAH, that was to come into the world, and that sufficed.* 'Twas a *Confession* not unlike to this, that the *Blind Man* made, to whom Christ gave *Sight*, when *Jesus* said but to him, *Dost thou believe on the Son of God?* *Lord,* said he, *I do be-*

Mat. 16

16, 17.

John 1.

49.

John 9.

35, 38.

lieve;

lieve, and be worshipped him. What shall we say of
 the rare Faith of the *Centurion*, preferred
 by Christ himself before any in *Israel*,
 though a *Gentile*? the Faith of the *Woman*
 and *Inhabitants of Samaria*, that he was the
 Messiah? of that *Importunate Woman* that
 cried to *Jesús*, *To cast a Devil out of her possessed Daughter*,
 and would not be put off, to whom Christ said: *O Wo-*
man, great is thy Faith, be it unto thee even as thou wilt.
 To which let me add the Faith of the People, that
 brought the *Man Sick of the Palsy* to
 Christ, who *uncover'd the Roof* to let
 him down to be toucht: The Faith of *Fai-*
rus the Ruler, and of that *Good Wo-*
man, who pressed through the Croud to
 touch the Hem of Christ's Garment;
 to whom *Jesús* said, *Be of good Com-*
fort, Daughter, thy Faith has made
Thee whole: Also the *Two Blind-Men*,
 that followed him out of the *Rulers*
House, crying; *Thou Son of David,*
have Mercy on us: To whom when
Jesús had said, *Believe ye, that I am*
able to do this: they Answered,
 YEA, LORD: then touch'd he their
 Eyes and said, *According to your Faith*
be it unto you. Also the *Blind Man*
 near *Jericho*: The *Leprous Samaritan*
 that Christ cleansed: And that *No-*
table Passage of the Woman, that *kissed*
his Feet and *anointed his Head*, to
 whom

Mat. 8. 10.

John 4.

Matth. 15,

23,—28.

Mark 2. 4, 5.

Ch. 3. 22.

Matth. 9. 20, 21,

22, 27.

Luke 18. 35, 42.

Chap. 17. 15,—

19.

Chap. 7. 45,—

50.

Acts 1. 37,—47.

Acts 10. 24,—

48.

Acts 8. 27,—

37.

whom he pronounced this Happy Sentence ; *Thy Faith hath saved thee, go in Peace.*

I will conclude this with that Famous Instance of the *Thief* upon the *Cross*, who neither knew nor had time to make a *Large Confession*, like Luke 23. 42, 43. the *Creds* of these dayes : but it seems he said enough, *Lord, remember me, when thou comest into thy Kingdom.* And *Jesus* said unto him ; *Verily, I say unto thee, to day shalt thou be with me in Paradise.* By which it is easie to learn, that 'twas the *Heart* not the *Mouth*, the *Sincerity* not the *Words*, that made the *Confession Valid*.

Nor was this only in the *Days of Christ* the Effect of his *Gracious Dispensation* or peculiar *Indulgence*, *After-times* afford us the like Instances. This was the main Bent of *Peter's Sermon* : and when the *Three thousand* believed, that he, whom the *Jews* had crucified, was both *Lord and Christ*, and repented of their *Sins*, and gladly received his *Word*, they are said to have been in a *State of Salvation*. Thus *Cornelius* and his *Houſhold* and *Kindred*, ſo ſoon as *Peter* declared *Jesus* to be the *Messiah*, and that they had believed, the *Holy Ghost* fell upon them, and they were received into the *Chriſtian Communion*. But the *Story* of the *Eunuch* is very pat to our purpose : As he rid in his *Charriot*, he was reading theſe words out of the *Prophet Iſaiab*, viz. *That he was led as a Sheep to the Slaught-er, and like a Lamb dumb before the Shearers, ſo opened he not his Mouth.* In his *Humiliation* his *Judgment* was taken away : and who ſhall declare his *Generation* ? for his *Life* is taken from the *Earth*. *Philip* joynd to him and

and askt him, *If he understood what he read?* he desired *Philip* to interpret the mind of the Prophet, if he spoke of him self or another? *Philip* upon the place preached to him *Jesus*: the *Eunuch* was so well persuaded by the Apostle, that coming to a Water, he said, *What doth hinder me to be Baptized?* *Philip* answered him; *If thou believest with all thine heart, thou may'st*: To this the *Eunuch* replied, *I believe, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.* Upon which he was Baptized: and 'tis said, *He went away rejoicing*: which indeed he might well do, that felt the Comfort of his Faith, the Remission of Sin and the Joys of the holy Ghost.

I will conclude these Examples with a Passage in the *Acts* of *Paul* at *Thessalonica*, 'tis this: *Acts 17.* *Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them,* 2, 3, 4 *and Three Sabbath-dayes reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alledging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead: and that this Jesus (said he) whom I preach unto you, is Christ. And some of them believed and consorted with Paul and Silas: and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the Chief Women not a few. Thus we may plainly see, that they were Baptiz'd into the Faith of Jesus, and not into Numerous Opinions; and that this one Confession from true Faith in the heart was the ground & Principle of their Church-fellowship: then God's Church was at Peace; she thrive: there were then no Snares of Words made to catch Men of Conscience in. Then not many words, but much Integrity; now much Talk, and little Truth: Many Articles, but Oye of little Faith!*

Nor

Nor was this only the Judgment and Practice of that Time out of *Condescension to Weakness, and Charity to Ignorance*; for both Christ Jesus himself and his Apostles (those blessed Messengers of holy Truth) have doctrinally laid it down, as the great Test to *Christians*, that which should distinguish them from *Infidels*, and justly entitle them to his *Discipleship* and *Christian Communion* one with another. Then said they to Jesus, *what shall we do, that we might work the Works of God?* Jesus answered and said to them, *This is the Work of God, that ye BELIEVE ON HIM, whom God hath sent.* Verily, Verily, I say unto you, he that believeth on me, hath Everlasting Life. And upon another Occasion to the *Jews* he said: *For if ye believe not, that I am HE, ye shall die in your Sins:* It must follow then, that if they did believe him to be the Messiah, the Anointed of God to Salvation, they should be saved. Most plain is that Answer of the Apostles to the *Goaler*, when he came trembling to them and said, *Sirs, what must I do to be saved?* Believe (said they) on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved. The Apostle Paul confirms this in his Epistle to the *Romans*, when he says: *If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart, that God hath raised him from the Dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto Righteousness, and with the mouth Confession is made unto Salvation: For the Scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him, shall not be ashamed. For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek, for the same Lord over*

John 6.

28, 29.

-47.

Ch. 8.

24.

Acts 16.

30, 31.

Ro. 10.

8, 9, 10,

11, 12,

13.

All is rich unto all, that call upon him. For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord, shall be saved.

This was the word of Faith which they preached; and he testified, that it was nigh in the heart, as Moses had done before him. And saith the Apostle John on this Occasion, *Who is a Lyar, but he that denieth, that Jesus is the Christ? — Hereby know ye the Spirit of God; every Spirit that confesseth, that Jesus Christ is come in the Flesh, is of God.* Again says he, *whosoever shall confess, that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God: Yet once more he affirms, Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God.*

I will conclude these Doctrinal Testimonies out of Scripture with a Conclusive passage John useth towards the end of his Evangelical History of Jesus Christ: *And many other Signs truly did Jesus in the Presence of his Disciples, which are not written in this Book: But these are written, that ye might believe, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God, and that believing ye might have Life in his Name.* In which place Two things are remarkable: First, That whatever things are written of Jesus, are written to this end, *that we might believe, that Jesus is the Christ.* Secondly, *That those that sincerely believe, shall through him obtain Eternal Life.* Certainly then, if this be true, great must their Incharity and Presumption be, who have taken other measures, and set another Rule of Christianity, than Jesus and his Apostles gave. This sincere Confession contented Christ and his Apostles; but

but it will not satisfy those, that yet pretend to believe them: 'twas enough then for a Miracle and Salvation too, but it goes for little or nothing now. A man may sincerely believe this, and be stigmatiz'd for a Schismatick, an Heretick, an Excommunicate: but I may say (as Christ did to the Jews in another Case) *From the Beginning it was not so.*

But I expect here to be Assaulted with this *Objection*, If this be all, that is necessary to be believed to Salvation, of what use is the rest of Scripture?

Answer, Of great Use, as the Apostle himself teacheth us; *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is profitable for Doctrine, for Re- 2 Tim. 3. 16, 17.* proof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness, that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works. It concerns the whole Life and Conversation of a Man; but every passage in it is not therefore fit to be such an Article of Faith, as upon which Christian Communion ought or ought not to be maintained. For though it be all equally True, it is not all equally Important: There is a great Difference between the Truth and weight of a thing. For Example: 'Tis as True, that Christ suffered under Pontius Pilate, as that he suffered; and that he was pierced, as that he died; and that he did eat after his Resurrection, as that he rise from the Dead at all; but no Person of common Understanding will conclude an Equal Weight or Concernment in these things, because they are Equally True: The Death of Christ was of much greater Value than the Manner of it; his Resurrection, than any Circumstance of his Appearance,

after he was risen. The Question is not, whether all the *Truths* contain'd in *Scripture* are not to be believed; but Whether those *Truths* are Equally Important? and if the *Belief* with the heart and *Confession* with the mouth, that *Jesus* is the *Christ* and *Son of God*, be not as sufficient now to entitle a man to *Communion* here and *Salvation* hereafter, as in those times? against which nothing can be of Weight objected.

If it be said, that this *Contradicts* the *Judgment* and *Practise* of many great and good Men.

I answer; I can't help that. If they have been tempted out of their own *Curiosity* or the *Corruption* of *Times* to depart from the *Ancient Paths*, the Foot-steps of purest *Antiquity* and best *Examples*; let their *Preferences* have been what they will, 'tis *Presumption*: and it was Just with God, that *Error* and *Confusion* should be the *Consequence* of those *Adventures*; nor has it ever fail'd to follow them.

Lastly if it be alledg'd, That this will take in all *Parties*, yea, that *Schismatics* and *Hereticks* will creep in under this *General Confession*, since few of them will refuse to make it.

I do say, 'Twould be an *Happy Day*. What Man loves God and *Christ*, seeks *Peace* and *Concord*. that would not rejoice, if all our *Animosities* and *Vexations* about *Matters of Religion* were buried in this one *Confession* of *Jesus*, the great *Author* and *Lord* of the *Christian Religion*, (so often lost in pretending to contest for it.) View the *Parties* on Foot in *Christendom*
among

among those called *Protestants*, observe their Differences well, and how they are generally maintain'd; and you will tell me, that they are rent and divided about their own *Comments, Consequences and Conclusions*: not the *Text*, but the *Meaning*; and that too, which perhaps is not in it self *Essential* to *Sa'vation* (as the *Dispute* betwixt the *Lutherans* and *Calvinists*, the *Arminians* and *Predestinarians* and such like.) Is it not lamentable to think, that those, who pretend to be *Christians* and *Reformed* ones too, should divide with the *Winds* and fight as *pro-Aris & Focis* for such things, as either are not *Expressly* to be found in *Scripture*, or if there, yet never appointed or intended for such *Prime Articles of Faith* by *Christ* or his *Apostles*. Should they then erect their *Communion* on another *Bottom*, or break it for deviating from any other *Doctrines*, than what they (*in terminis*) in so many words have deliver'd to us for necessary?

If we consider the Matter well, I fear it will be found; that the *Occasion of Disturbance* in the *Church of Christ* hath in most Ages been found to lie on the side of those, who have had the *Greatest Sway* in it. Very pertinent to our present Purpose is that Passage of *J. Hales of Eaton* in his *Treat concerning Schism*: "It hath (saith he) been the *Common Disease of Christians* from the Beginning, not to content themselves with that *Measure of Faith*, which *God and Scriptures* have expressly afforded us; but out of a *Vain Desire* to know more than is *Revealed*, they have attempted to *DISCUSS THINGS*, of which

Treat of Schism,
(printed with other things) pag.
212, 213.

"we

" we can have no *Light*, neither from *Reason* nor *Reve-*
 " *lation*. Neither have they rested here, but upon
 " pretence of *Church-Authority* (which is NONE)
 " or *Tradition* (which for the most part is but FIG-
 " MENT) they have peremptorily concluded and
 " confidently imposed upon others a *Necessity* of En-
 " tertaining *Conclusions* of that Nature; and to streng-
 " then themselves have broken out into *Divisions* and
 " *Factions*, opposing *Man to Man*, *Synod to Synod*, till
 " the *Peace* of the *Church* vanished without all Possibi-
 " lity of Recall. Hence arose those Ancient and ma-
 " ny Separations amongst *Christians*, *Arianism*, *Euty-*
 " *chianism*, *Nestorianism*, *Photinianism*, *Sabellianism*,
 " and many more both Ancient and in our Time.

And as he hath told us one great Occasion of the
 Disease, so he offers what follows, for the Cure: " And

p. 215, " were *Liturgies* (sayes he) and *Publick Forms*

216, " of *Service* so framed, as that they admit-

217, " ted not of *particular* and *private Fancies*, but

218, " contained only such things, as in which all

" *Christians* do agree, *Schisms* on *Opinion* were

" utterly vanished. Whereas to load our *Publick Forms*

" with the *Private Fancies* upon which we differ, is the

" most soveraign Way to perpetuate *Schism* unto the

" *World's End*.—Remove from them, whatsoever is

" scandalous to any *Party*; and leave nothing, but what

" all agree on: and the Event shall be, that the *Publick*

" *Service* and *Honor* of *God* shall no wayes suffer.—

" For to charge *Churches* and *Liturgies* with Things

" Unnecessary, was the First Beginning of all *Super-*

" *stition*.—If the spiritual Guides and *Fathers* of

" the *Church* would be a little sparing of Incumbering

" *Churches* with *Superfluities*, and not over-rigid ei-

" ther

"ther in reviving *Obsolete Customs*, or imposing *New*,
 "there were far less *Danger of Schism or Superstition*—
 "Mean while wheresoever *false or suspected Opinions*
 "are made a piece of the *Church Liturgy*, he that *sepa-*
 "rates, is not a *Schismatick*: for it is alike Unlawful
 "to make Profession of known or suspected Falshoods,
 "as to put in Practice Unlawful or Suspect Actions.
 He further tells us in his *Sermon of Dealing with Er-*
ring Christians, "That it is the Unity of the
 "Spirit in the Bond of Peace, and not the
 "Identity (or Oneness) of Conceit which
 "the Holy Ghost requires at the Hands of
 "Christians—
 "A better Way my Conceit
 "cannot reach unto, then that we should be willing
 "to think, that these things, which with some Shew
 "of Probability we deduce from *Scripture*, are at the
 "best but *Our Opinions*. For this peremptory Manner
 "of setting down our *Conclusions* under this High
 "Commanding Form of *Necessary Truths*, is general-
 "ly one of the greatest Causes, which keeps the
 "Churches this Day so far assunder; whereas a *Grati-*
 "ous Receiving of each other by Mutual Forbearance
 "in this kind might peradventure in time bring them
 "nearer together.

J. Hales,
Golden
Remains,
 p. 49, 50.

Thus much of this Great Man concerning *Schism*,
 the Cause and Cure of it: and for the Notion of *He-*
reticks he will help us altogether as well. For though
 they are generally taken for such as err in Judgment
 about Doctrines and Articles of Faith, yet if this
 Man may have any Credit (and perhaps none of his
 Profession has deserv'd more) he tells us, that "Hereſie
 "is an Act of the Will, not of Reason, and is indeed a
 "Lye, not a Mistake: else (sayes he) how could that
 "known

known Speech of *Austin* for true, *Errare possum*,
Heresicum esse nolo: I may err, but I am unwill-
 ling to be an Heretick. And indeed this is no o-
 ther, than what Holy Scripture teacheth; *A Man that*
is an Heretick, after the first and second Admo-
 Tit. 3. *nition reject; knowing, that he that is such, is*
 10, 11. *subverted and sinneth, being CONDEMN-*
 ED OF HIMSELF. Which is as much as to
 say, that no body is an *Heretick*, but he that gives the
 Lye to his own Conscience and is *Self-condemned*:
 Which is not the Case of Men meerly Mistaken, or
 who only err in Judgment. And therefore the Term
 of *Heretick* is as Untruly as Uncharitably flung upon
 those, that Conscientiously dissent either in point of
Discipline or *Doctrine* from any Society of Christians:
 and it is not hard to observe, that those who have best
 merited it, have most liberally bestow'd it.

But to show you, that neither true *Schismatick* (who
 is *One, that unnecessarily and unwarrantably separates*
from that part of the Visible Church, of which he was
once a Member) nor true *Heretick* (who is a wilful Sub-
 verter of True or an Introducer of false Doctrines; a Self-
 condemned Person) can ever shelter himself under this
 Common Confession of Christianity sincerely made, Let
 us consider, that who-ever so declares *Jesus* to be the
Messiah and *Anointed Saviour* of God to Men, must be
 supposed to believe all that of him, with respect to
 which he is so called. Now that for which he is so
 denominated, is that which God sent him to do: the
 Reason and End of his coming he could best tell, who
 hath told us thus; *I am come, that ye may have Life, and*
that ye may have it more abundantly. The World was

as dead in Trespasses and Sins, the guilt and dolement of Transgression had kill'd the Soul as to *Spiritual Life* and *Motion*; and from under this powerful Death he came to redeem the Soul unto *Life*: in short, to restore Man from this Fearful Degeneracy, his Disobedience to God had reduced him to.

The Way he took to accomplish this Blessed Work was *First*, To preach *Repentance* and the Approach of the *Kingdom of God*, which is his *Rule* and his *Authority* in the *Hearts of men*, which brings us to the *Second thing* to be believed, namely——

What he Taught ?

1. First, his Doctrine led Men to *Repentance*: *Repent, for the Kingdom of God is at hand.* No Man could receive the *Kingdom of God*, John 3. whilst he lived under the *Kingdom and Power* 20. *of Satan*: so that to *Repent* is not only 21. to bring their *Deeds to the Light* (which Christ exhorteth Men to;) but to *for sake* that, which upon Examination appeared to be *Evil*. Wherefore I conclude, that such as have not been acquainted with this *Holy Repentance*, do not sincerely *believe*, neither can *Rightly confess* Jesus to be the *Christ the Son of God*, the *Saviour of the World*. Therefore saith the *Apostle*, *Let him that nameth the Name of the Lord, depart from Iniquity*: plainly implying, that those do rather *Prophane* than *Confess the Name of the Lord*, who do not *Depart from their Iniquities*. And (saith the *Apostle* in another place) *No man can call Jesus LORD, but by the Holy Ghost*: Which opens to us the *Nature of the True Confession*, to wit, *That the True*

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Confession of Jesus to be both Lord and Christ is from such a Belief in the Heart, as is the work of the Holy Ghost; and those that do not Confess him or call upon him by Virtue of the Overshadowings of this Divine Spirit and Power, are not truly Christians, true Worshippers, Believers and Disciples.

Furthermore, they that receive Christ, receive his Kingdom, his Power and Authority in their Souls; the strong Man that kept the house, becomes bound, and his Goods spoiled by this stronger man the LORD'S CHRIST, who is come from Heaven to dwell in us and be the Hope of our Glory: for so he was preached to the Gentiles. This Kingdom (the Apostle tells us) stands in Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost: and Christ tells us, where it is to be set up? The Kingdom of God is within you, saith the King himself; and where should the King be, but in his own Kingdom? they are blessed, that feel him to Rule and that live under the swaying of his Righteous Scepter: for when this Righteous One Rules the Earth, the Sons of Men rejoice.

So that no Man can truly Confess and rightly Believe Jesus to be the Christ and Son of God, that do not receive him to be his King, to rule his Heart & Affections. For can a Man be said to believe in one, that he will not receive? but To as many as received Christ of Old, ^{John 1.} gave he Power to become the Sons of God, which ^{12, 13.} were born not of Blood, nor of the Will of the Flesh, nor of the Will of Man, but of God. What is this will of God? Paul answers the Question: The Will of God is your Sanctification; for this Christ came into

into the World. So that those that *believe and receive* Christ, he is made to them *Righteousness, Sanctification and Redemption*; that is, he has saved them from their Sins, Guilt and Defilement, and sanctified them from their Corruptions: they live now by the *Grace of God*, that teaches them to be of a *Sober, Righteous, Godlike Life*. *Ye shall know them by their Fruits*, saith Christ of the Pharisees; so shall Men know them, that sincerely *believe & confess Christ* by their sanctified Manners and *Blameless Conversation*. And *wo* to them that make other Distinctions! for God has made no other; there will be but *Goats and Sheep* at the *Last Day*, *Holy and Unholy*; *Just and Unjust*. Therefore let that be our Distinction, which ever was and will be God's Distinction: for all other Measures are the Effects of the *Passions* and *Presumptions* of Men.

But because it may be expected, that I should fix upon some few General Heads of *Christian Doctrine* from the Mouth of Christ and his Apostles as requisite to *Christian Communion*; I shall proceed to mention, what Christ eminently taught. He that reads his Sermon upon the Mount, will find in the Entrance, how many States and Conditions Christ *Blessed*; The *Poor in Spirit*, The *Mourners*, The *Meek*, They that *hunger after Righteousness*, The *Merciful*, The *Pure in Heart*, and the *Peace-makers*; which indeed Comprehend the whole of Christianity. By *Mourners* we understand true Penitents, Men of *Unfeigned Repentance*; which leads them not only to *Confess* but *For sake* their Sins. This *Godly Sorrow*

makes Men *Poor* in *Spirit*, *Empty of themselves, wanting the *Light*, *Life* and *Power* of *Jesus* to support and sustain them; in which as they stedfastly walk, the *Attonement* of the Blood is felt, and it cleanseth them from all *Unrighteousness*: which makes them *Pure* in *Heart*. And in this Condition no Food will serve their Turn but *Righteousness*; after this they *Hunger* and *Thirst* more than for the Bread that perisheth. They are full of *Meekness*, and *Mercy*, *Making Peace* and Promoting Concord, where-ever they come: For being themselves reconciled to God, they endeavour to reconcile all Men unto God and one unto another.

In short, let us bring it home to our Consciences and deal faithfully with our selves. Do we know this *Holy Mourning*? this *Godly Sorrow*? are we *Poor* in *Spirit*? not Self-conceited, but *Humble*, *Meek* and *Lowly* in *Heart*, like him that bid us be so? Do we *Hunger* after the *Kingdom of God* and *Righteousness* of it? and are our *Hearts* purified by the Precious Faith of the Son of God? *In fine*, Are we *Merciful*? *Tender-hearted*? Lovers of *Peace* more than lovers of our selves? *Persecuted* rather than *Persecutors*? such as receive *Stripes* for Christ's sake, and not those that beat our Fellow-Servants? No Man has true *Faith* in Christ *Jesus*, that is not acquainted with these Blessed Qualifications: This is Christ's Doctrine; and to believe in him is to obey it and be like him.

The great Intendment of this Sermon is to press people to a more Excellent *Righteousness* than that of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*. For (saith *Jesus* to the Multitude,

ritude) Except your Righteousness shall exceed
the Righteousness of the Scribes and Phari- Vers. 40.
sees, ye shall in no Case enter into the King-
dom of Heaven.

(1.) He taught, not only that Killing
but Anger without a very Just Cause Vers. 21,
is Unlawful to his Disciples. 22.

(2.) he prefers Concord above De-
votion, Mercy before Sacrifice; He that Vers. 23,
will not use his Utmost Endeavour to 24,
be reconciled to his Brother, shall find no 25.
place for his Prayers: And Every Man is
this Brother.

(3.) He not only forbids Adultery,
which the Law forbids; but Lust: the Vers. 28,
Ax of his Doctrine is laid to the Root of 29,
the Tree; it reaches to the First Seeds of 30.
things, to the Innermost and most hidden
Conceptions of the Mind.

(4.) From Keeping and Perform-
ing Legal Vows to not Swearing at all: and Vers. 33,
indeed, what Use can there be of any 34.
Swearing, where Mens *rea* is *rea*, and
their *Nay*, *Nay*.

(5.) He taught Not to resist Evil, but to suffer Loss
rather than enter into Contention: his
Divine Wisdom did fore-see, how much Vers. 39,
easier it would be, to Overcome the Violent 40.
Passions of Men by Patience than Contro-
versie. And he that considers the Unruliness of some
Mens Dispositions, their Heats and Prejudices, it
will be found, that it is not alwayes a Real Injury or
Loss,

Loss, but *Passion, Revenge or Base Interest*, that sets them to *Sutes and Clamours*.

(6.) He taught us the Highest Complaisance and *Charity*: *If any Man compel thee to go a Mile,*
 Vers. 41. *go with him twain.* Be of an Easy and Ready Mind to *Do Good*, and to all *Friends*, *Offices* be easily perswaded; and in which rather exceed than fall short.

(7.) He taught us great *Liberality and Charity*; to give to him that asks, and from him that would
 Vers. 42. borrow, not to turn away; in short, to be Stewards of our *External Substance* for the Good of Mankind, according to our *Respective Abilities*.

(8.) He advances the Doctrine of Loving Friends to the Degree of *Loving Enemies*. Ye have
 Vers. 43, heard (said Jesus) that it hath been said,
 44, 45. *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour and shalt hate thine Enemy*; but I say unto you, *Love your Enemies*, *blest them that Curse you*, *do good to them that hate you*, and *pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you*. Surely then, where no *Anger* dwells, no *Revenge* can grow; and if we must *love Enemies*, there is no Man left to be hated. This is the Doctrine of that Jesus, that laid down his Life for all; and this is the End for which he preached it, *That* (says he) *ye may be the Children of your Father, which is in Heaven*; for he maketh his Sun to rise on the Evil and on the Good, and sendeth Rain on the Just and on the Unjust, It is as much as if Christ had said; No Man can be like God, that does not Love his Enemies, and who cannot do good to all: Consequently, he that does Love
 Eng.

Enemies, and is ready to Do good unto all, he is like God the Father, that is in Heaven, who is Love.

(9.) Christ teaches us to avoid Ostentation in our Charity: Take heed that ye do not your Alms before Men to be seen of them. Mat. 6. 1.

(10.) He teaches us the Duty of Prayer, where and what: not in the Corners of the Streets, nor in the Synagogues to be seen of Man; but in the Closet, in the secret of the Heart betwixt God and the Soul. Ver. 5, 6.

(11.) He forbids Hoarding and Laying up of Money in Bank, presses Treasuring up of Wealth in Heaven: and the Reason is this, that the one is Corruptible, and the other is Incorruptible. Ver. 19, 20.

(12.) He teaches Dependence upon the Providence of God; calling the Dis-trustful, O ye of little Faith. which of you (says he) by taking Thought can add one Cubit to his Stature? therefore take no Thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewith shall we be clothed: for after all these things the Gentiles seek; for your Heavenly Father knoweth, that you have need of all these things. But seek ye first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Ver. 25. to the end.

(13.) He sets up a Discrimination or Distinction between false and true Prophets, those that are his Disciples, from Counterfeits. Ye shall know them (said Christ) by their Fruits: Do men gather Grapes of Thorns or Figs of Thistles? even so every good Tree bringeth forth Good Fruit, but a Corrupt Tree bringeth forth

Matth. 7. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

Evil

Evil Fruit. A Good Tree cannot bring forth Evil Fruit, neither can a Corrupt Tree bring forth good Fruit: wherefore by their Fruits ye shall know them. This was the Distinction given by Christ to his Followers; the Tree was not accounted Good or Bad by the Leaves, but the Fruits; not by the Opinions, but the Holy living. The Faith in that Day was an Entire Resignation and Dependence upon God, and not a Subscription to Verbal Propositions and Articles, though never so True: that was the Work of After-times, more Corrupt and Superstitious Ages. But—

(14.) Lastly Christ preaches the General Judgement. Ver. 21. to Many will say to me in that Day [what Day? the Day of Account and Final Reckoning the end.] Lord, Lord; have we

not prophesied in thy Name, and in thy Name cast out Devils, and done many wonderful Works? And then (said Christ) will I profess unto them, I never knew you, Depart from me, ye that work Iniquity. Not every one that saith, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the will of my Father, which is in Heaven. Therefore whosoever heareth these Sayings of mine and doth them, I will liken him unto a Wise Man, which built his House upon a Rock; and the Rain descended and the Floods came, and the Winds blew and beat upon that House, and it fell not; for it was builded upon a Rock. And every one that heareth these Sayings of Mine, and doth them not, shall be likened unto a Foolish Man, which built his House upon the Sand: and the Rain descended, and the Floods came and the winds blew, and beat upon that House, And it fell, and great was the Fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these Sayings, the

People were astonished at his Doctrine: for he taught them as one having Authority, and not as the Scribes.

By all which it is most plain, that as Christ is the Rock, on which true Christians build; so none can be said truly to build upon this Rock, but those that keep his Sayings, that do his Commandments, that obey his Doctrine. Wherefore that Faith of JESUS to be the SON and CHRIST of GOD must be such a Faith, as does the Will of the Heavenly Father, and keepeth THESE SAYINGS of Christ.

There are Two places, in which Christ seems to sum up his blessed Doctrine: One is this, *Therefore all things, whatsoever ye would, that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them; for this is the Law and the Prophets;* Which Christ came not to destroy, but to fulfill. But the other Passage seems to be more full, the first relating only to our Dealings with Men; this Second Passage comprehends our Duty both to God and Men, viz.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind; this is the first and great Commandment: and the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self. In these two Commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

This is the Perfection of the Christian Religion, the Great Commandment of Christ, the Certain Token of Discipleship. *A new Commandment (said Christ) I give unto you, that ye Love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another: by this shall all men know, that ye are my Disciples, if ye have love one to*

another

another. Again, Christ speaks to his Disciples; *If ye keep my Commandments, ye shall abide in my Love, even as I have kept my Father's Commandments, and abide in his Love: and this is my Commandment, that ye Love one another, as I have loved you.*

John 15. 10, 12, 14, 17. Yet once more: *Ye are my Friends, if ye do, whatsoever I command you, and these things I command you, that you Love one*

another. *He that hath my Commandments and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me, and he that loveth me, shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him*

John 14. 21. *and will manifest my self to him: but he that loveth me not, keepeth not my Sayings.*

So that only those are Friends, and Disciples of Christ Jesus that do his Sayings and keep his Commandments, and the Great Commandment of all is LOVE: for upon this One Commandment all the rest depend.

For he that loves God above all, will leave all for God: not one of his Commandments shall be slighted: and he that loves his Neighbour, will much more love the Household of Faith. Well may such be True Christians, when their Faith in Christ works by LOVE, by the Power of this Divine Love:

1 John 4. 16. *he that dwells in this Love, dwell in God, (if John say true) for he is Love. And in this he recommended his Love unto us, that he sent his only Begotten Son, — that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have Everlasting Life:*

John 15. 12, 13, 14. *Also herein did Christ manifest his Love, in laying down his Life for us. This is my Commandment (said Christ) that ye Love one*

one another, *as I have loved you: and, Greater love hath no Man than this, that a Man lays down his Life for his Friends; ye are my Friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.* Indeed he gave his Life for the World, and offered up *One Common Sacrifice for Man.* Heb. 10. kind: and by his *One Offering up of himself once for all he hath forever perfected* [that is, quitted and discharged and taken into Favour] *them that are sanctified; who have received the Spirit of Grace and Sanctification in their Hearts: for such as resist it, receive not the Benefit of that Sacrifice.*

This Holy Offering up of himself by the Eternal Spirit, is a Great Part of his *Messiahship*; for therein he hath both confirmed his Blessed Message of Remission of Sins and Life Everlasting to as many as truly believe in his Name, and given himself a Propitiation for all that have sinned, and so came short of the Glory of God: in so much that God is said by the Apostle Paul to be *Just, and the Justifier of him, which believeth in Jesus, whom God hath set forth to be a Propitiation* Rom. 3. 25, through Faith in his Blood to declare his Righteousness for the Remissions of Sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. 26, 27.

Unto which I shall Join his *Mediatorship* or *Advocacy*, link'd together both by the Apostle Paul and the beloved Disciple John: the first in these words; *For there is One God and one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a Ransom for all to be testified in due Time.* The Apostle John expresseth it thus: *My little Children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not; and if any Man sineth, we have* 1 Tim. 2. 5, 6. 1 John 2. 1, 2.

an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the Righteous, he is the Propitiation for our Sins, and not for ours only, but also for the Sins of the whole World.

So that (to be Brief) the *Christian Creed* so far as it is Declaratory, lies eminently in a Confession of these Particulars. Of the *Divine Authority* of the *New* as well as of the *Old Testament Writings*; and therein of these Great, General and Necessary Truths expressly, to wit, Of *Christ*, his *Miracles*, *Doctrine*, *Death*, *Resurrection*, *Advocacy* or *Mediation*, the Gift of his *Grace*, *Faith* and *Repentance* unto *Remission of Sins*, the *Necessity of Keeping his Commandments*, and lastly of *Eternal Recompence*.—Less once than all this would have done; and it does not shew the Age more Christian, but more Curious, indeed more *Infidel*, that there is this Stir made about *External Creeds of Communion*: for *Distrust* of Brethren and *Incredulity* among Christians is no small Sign of their Decay of Faith towards God; *From the Beginning 'twas not so*.

But it may be here Objected, *How shall we know, that such a Declaration of Faith is sincere?* Answer, By recurring to that Evidence, which God shall give us. They that can try *Spirits* under the most-Sheep-like Clothing, have the most-Immediate and Certain Proof; but let it suffice, that Christ hath told us, *By their Fruits ye shall know them*. If any Man, says Matth. 16. 24. *Christ, will come after me, let him take up his Cross and follow me*: and in another place he tells us thus, *My Sheep hear my Voice, and I know them and they follow me*; that is, They are John 10. 27. *led by my Spirit, they live my Life, they obey my Doctrine*. And the Apostle Peter assures us, that

that *True Faith purifies the Heart*: and no Impurity can flow from a *pure Heart*: You may know this *Faith* by that *Way*, by which *Abraham's Faith* was known to be *True*, to wit, *Obedience*. He believed God, that is, He obeyed God; he submitted to the Will of God and relied upon his Goodness: He that gave me my Son by a Miracle, can work another to save him; To God all things are Possible. It is call'd by the Apostle

Acts 13. 9.

Rom. 4.

2 Cor. 4. 13.

Paul The Spirit of *Faith*; something more near and inward, than any *External Articles* and *Declaration* of *Faith*, that from whence all *True Confessions* and *good works* come; which made the Apostle *Paul* thus to say; We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our Prayers, remembering without Ceasing your Work of *Faith*. 1 Theſ. 1. 2, 3.

'Twas this true *Faith*, that brings forth *Works* of *Righteousness*, by which *Abel* Offered to God, *Enoch* was Translated, *Noah* was saved: it is said of him, that he became *Heir* of the *Righteousness*, which is by *Faith*. By this *Faith* *Abraham* left his own Country, and obey'd the Voice of God. By *Faith* *Moses* was preserved from his Childhood; and when he came to years, refus'd to be called the Son of *Pharaoh's Daughter*: by *Faith* he forsook *Egypt*, and passed the *Red Sea*. By *Faith* the walls of *Jericho* fell down, and *Rahab* was saved. By *Faith* *Gideon*, *Barak*, *Sampson*, *Jephtha*, *David*, *Samuel* and the Prophets subdued Kingdoms, wrought *Righteousness*, obtained Promises, stopped the Mouthes of *Lyons*, quenched the Violence of *Fire*, escaped the Edge of the *Sword*; with much more too large to be utter'd. Heb. 11.

This

This is that Faith, which the Apostle James magnifies against all false Faiths: Faith (says he) if it be not Works, is dead. A Man may say, Jam. 2. 17, 18, Thou hast Faith, and I have Works; 19, 20, 21, 22, shew me thy Faith without thy Works, 23, 24. & I will shew thee my Faith by my Works.

And as if he had fore-seen the Men of Creeds and Articles, he speaks on this wise: Thou believest that there is One God, thou doest well; the Devils also believe and Tremble. But wilt thou know, O Vain Man, that Faith without Works is dead. Was not Abraham our Father justified by Works, when he had offered Isaac his Son upon the Altar? seest thou how Faith wrought with his Works? and by Works was Faith made perfect. — And he was called the Friend of God.

And the Exhortation of the Apostle Peter is a plain Discrimination of true Faith; And besides 2 Pet. 1. 5, this, giving all Diligence, add to your Faith 6, 7, 8, 9. Virtue, and to Virtue Knowledge, and to Knowledge Temperance, and to Temperance Patience, and to Patience Godliness, and to Godliness Brotherly Kindness, and to Brotherly Kindness Charity. For if these things be in you and abound, they make you, that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things, is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old Sins.

I will seal up these Scripture Testimonies of Faith with that Account which is given us by the Apostle 1 John 4. John, For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the Victory, that overcometh the World, even our Faith. Who is he that

that overcometh the world, but he that believed, that Jesus is the Son of God? So that the Belief in the Son of God must have this Evidence to prove it true, that by it Men are born of God and overcome the World: so that their Faith is false, whom the world Overcomes. I am not of this World, saith Christ Jesus; neither can that Faith be, that is called the Faith of the Son of God.

There are Three Passages left us upon Record by this Beloved Disciple of Jesus of Great Weight and Importance to us; when he had discoursed of the Propitiation and Advocacy of Christ, he does immediately add; And hereby do we know that we know him, if we keep his Commandments. He ^{1 John 2. 3, 4, 5, 6.} that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments, is a Liar, and the Truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his Word, in him verily is the Love of God perfected: hereby know we, that we are in him. He that saith, he abideth in him, OUGHT HIMSELF ALSO SO TO WALK, EVEN AS HE WALKED.

The Second Passage very pertinent to this present matter is in the next Chapter; My little Children, let us not love in word neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And hereby we know, that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our Hearts before him: For if our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all things. Beloved, if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God; and whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his Commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight. And this

Chap. 3. 18,
19, 20, 21,
22, 23.

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is his Commandment, that we should believe on the Name of his Son JESUS Christ, and love one another, as he gave us Commandment.

The Third and last Passage, which I shall mention on this Account is in his fourth Chapter of the same Epistle, viz. *And we have seen and do testifie, that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. whosoever shall confess, that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him and he in God. And we have known and believed the Love, that God hath to us: God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love dwelleth in God, and God in him. Herein our love is made perfect, that we may have Boldness in the Day of Judgment, because AS HE IS, SO ARE WE IN THIS WORLD.*

These are the Holy Fruits of all that love God and believe in Christ, that are the Family of the Faithful, regenerated and redeemed from the Earth; Wherever two or three of them are met together, Christ is in the midst of them; they neither Ask nor Hope in vain. With this Character let us take a View of all Persons and Societies of Christians throughout the World, not forgetting our selves: let us hereby try their Faith and Religion and our own; if it be of God the Father, it is Pure and Undeiled, it leads them that have it, to Visit the Fatherless and widow in their Affliction, and to keep themselves Unspotted from the World: Is this our Case?

If it be Objected, Which way shall we obtain this like Precious Faith? I answer: They must take diligent Heed to the Light and Grace, that comes by Jesus, that Candle of the Lord, which he has set up in

in our Souls: we must bring our Deeds to this *Light*, see, if they be wrought in God or no? For this gives us to discern betwixt the Precious and the Vile, the one gives Joy, the other brings a load of Guilt upon the Soul: do we not *know*, that we *Do the things we ought not*: and that we *Leave undone the things we ought to do*? this will be our Judgment: For therefore Men are Condemnable, because they *know*.

These therefore, that would obtain this *precious Faith*, that overcomes the World, must embrace the *Grace* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*, by which this *Faith* is begotten: and they, who believe not in this *Grace*, nor receive it in the love of it, nor give themselves up to be taught and led by it, can never be said truly to believe in him, from whom it comes, any more then the *Jews* may be said to *believe in God*, when they rejected him that came from God, his *Beloved Son*. He that denyes the *Measure*, can never own or receive the *Fulness*. *John* bears Record, that he was *Full of Grace and Truth*, and that *John 1.14, 16, 17.* of his *Fulness* they received, and *Grace* for *Grace*: for the *Law* was given by *Moses*, but *Grace and Truth* came by *Jesus Christ*: So that 'tis utterly Impossible for a Man to *believe in Christ*, and not to be taught by the *Grace* that comes from him and by him.

'Tis a Common saying of People in these dayes, *We are not under the Law, but under Grace*; who are in Truth under *Sin* and the *Law of Death*, Subjects to the Prince of the Power of the Air, who reigns in the hearts of the Children of Disobedience; and their Lives shew it: No; those are under *Grace*, that live the holy Life of it. For the *Grace of God*, that bringeth *Salvation* (saith the Apostle *Paul*, Tit. 2. ii. 12.) hath Appeared to

*All Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and
Worldly Lusts we should live Soberly, Righteously and God-
ly in this present World: These are the People that be-
lieve in Christ unto the saving of the Soul. This is
that Blessed Light, which shines in the hearts of those
that believe, and gives them the Knowledge of the Glory
of God in the face of Jesus Christ: the Ancients walk'd
John 8.12. in it, and found Eternal Life by it. I am the
Light of the World, said Christ, he that
follows me, shall not walk in Darkness, but have the Light
of Life. The Saints Armed themselves with it a-
gainst the fiery Darts of Satan, and by the
Rom. 13.12, Vertue and Power that is in it, were en-
13, 14. abled to overcome Temptation. And this
will be the Condemnation of Disobedient Men, that
they see, but shut their Eyes; know the Light, but
rebel against it. Christ by his holy Light in the Con-
science shews Men their Danger, warns them of it be-
fore it comes upon them: no Man on Earth can plead
either Ignorance or Surprise.*

'Tis true, the *Candle of the Wicked is often put out;*
But that it implies, 'tis often *lighted*, and that men Sin
against Conviction, against Sight and Knowledge:
'tis wilfull, and that's dangerous. No Faith in Diso-
bedience will do, no Faith without *holy Fruits, holy
works*, will save. Men must be *born again*, if ever
they will enter into the Kingdom of God: there is no
Fellowship between Christ and Belial; People must
part with their *Vile Affections and Inordinate Desires*,
or they are no Company for Christ; they have no
Share in him. What part can *Pride* have in Humili-
ty? *Wrath* in Meekness? *Lust* in Self-denial? *Revenge*

in Forgiveness? To pretend, to believe in Christ, and not to be like him, is a Contradiction. *This is the Message* (said the Beloved Disciple) *which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is Light, and in him is no Darkness at all: If we say, that we have Fellowship with him and walk in Darkness, we lye and do not the Truth.* The Truth is, all such Faith and Profession, are a Lye in the Right Hand, a Cheat upon a Man's Self. But (says he) *if we walk in the Light as God is in the Light, we have Fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from ALL SIN.* If we say, that we have no Sin [to be cleansed from] we deceive our selves, and the Truth is not in us: But if we confess our Sins, he is Faithful and Just to forgive us our Sins, and to CLEANSE us from ALL UNRIGHTEOUSNESS.

To Conclude, Christ Jesus the Son of God and Saviour of the World is *Holy, Harmless and Undeiled*, and so must his Followers be; he is no Head of a Corrupt Body, nor Master of Rebellious Servants: he that has not the *Wedding Garment*, must be cast out; the Branch that brings not forth Fruit, will be cut off. But those that truly believe in his Name, walk in his Light, and are taught by his Grace to renounce the *Lusts of the Eye, the Lusts of the Flesh and Pride of Life*; the Unjust Profits, Pleasures and Poms of this World, and chuse to follow him in his own Holy Way of Regeneration: the same is his Brother, his Sister and his Mother. And whatever Losses they may sustain for his Names sake, they have the Promise of

Mark 3. 32,
33, 34, 35.

Mat. 19. 28, 29.

an *Hundred-fold* here, and the Inheritance of *Everlasting Life*.

And I do fervently beseech Almighty God, the Giver of all *Saving Faith*, mercifully to Vouchsafe more and more to beget a *Serious Enquiry* in us, What that *Faith* is, which we have? who is the Author of it? and what Fruits it hath brought forth? that we may not prophane the Name of God by a *Vain Profession* of it, nor abuse our selves unto *Eternal Perdition*; But that we may endeavour (by God's Assistance) to approve our selves such Believers, as sincerely fear God, love Righteousness and hate every Evil Way, as becomes the Redeemed of God by the pretious Blood of his Son. Since therefore we are not our own, but the *Lord's*, who hath bought us with that Great Price, let us glorific him in our *Bodies*, in our *Souls* and in our *Spirits*, which are his. Then shall we be Children of *Abraham* indeed, Heirs of the Promises, partakers of that Resurrection and Life, that Immortality and Glory, which God the Righteous Judge will one Day plentifully distribute to them that abide in this pretious *Faith* unto the End.

This naturally brings me to my *Third Head*, and an Unhappines we have long labour'd under, to wit,

A Debaſing of the true Value of MORALITY under pretence of Higher Things, miſtaking the very End of Chriſt's Coming.

By MORALITY I underſtand Vertuous Living, Purity of Manners, that Juſtice, Temperance, Truth, Charity and Blameleſſneſs in Converſation, which may

may well Denominate the Man that lives that Life, a MAN JUST; in short, one that does unto all men, as he would have all Men do unto him, this is the Moral Man. It is Notorious, how small an Estimate Two sorts of people have put upon him, the Prophane and the Professors (the Publican and the Pharisee :) The First despise him as too *Squeamish*, Nice and Formal, they deride his Regularity and make a Jest of his Preciseness. And thinking *No Man can be good*, because they are Nought; and that all must needs fall by those Temptations they will not resist; they construe *Sobriety* to be a Trick to decoy Mankind, and put a Cheat upon the World. If they hear any one say, *Such a Man is a Sober and Just Person*, They have learned by themselves to call him *Knave*; that he has a *Design* upon some body by being *Just* in little things, to Cheat in things of more Moment. This Man is very Unfashionable among Men of *Immoral Principles*, for his very Looks and Life carry a Reproof with them upon *Vicious Men*, who, as if Virtue were their *Common Enemy*, are in Combination against the Lovers and Entertainers of her. Because such true *Virtues* will neither do the Ill things, they would have them, nor flatter them in the Ills they do; and therefore where Ill Men have the Power, Good Men are sure to be made the *Common Enemy*.

But the Reproaches that Men of *Morality* receive at the Hands of Lewd Men, are more their Honour than their Suffering. But that which is most of all Anxious, is that *Morality* is denyed to be *Christianity*; that Virtue has any Claim to Grace, and that those, who glory to be called *Christians*, can be so Partial
and

and Cruel, as to renounce a mere *Fast Man* their Society, and send him preaching among the *Perjurers* for Damnation. And pray, what's the Matter? *why!* though this Person be a sober Liver, yet he is but a General Believer; his Faith is at large: 'Tis true, he believes in God, but I hear little of his Faith in Christ. Very well: Does he not therefore believe in Christ? or must he therefore be without the Pale of Salvation? Is it possible that a Man can truly believe in God and be damned? But as he that believes in Christ, believes in God, so he that believes in God, believes in Christ: For he that believes on him, that raised up Jesus from the Dead, his Faith shall be imputed to him for Righteousness. And says Christ himself, He that believeth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath Everlasting Life: Has he that believes in God, no Interest in this Expression? But more particular is that place of the Apostle to the Hebrews, viz. For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Diligent Rewarder of them that seek him. Now, if those who so believe, can come to God, the Moral Man's Condition is not Dangerous even in the strictest sense of the Word, not only such as have a General Faith of Christianity, and never adhered to any particular Party (a Sense, we shall anon consider) but even those, who never heard the History of Christ, nor had a distinct Knowledge of him, as we profess him.

For it seems a most-unreasonable thing, that Faith in God and keeping his Commandments should be no Part of the Christian Religion: but if a Part it be, (as upon

upon serious Reflection who dare deny it?) then those before and since Christ's time, who never had the External Law nor History, yet have *done the things contained in the Law, their Consciences not Accusing nor Murtr Condemning, but excusing them before God,* are in some degree concern'd in the Character of a true Christian. For Christ himself preach'd and kept his Father's Commandments; he came to fulfil and not to destroy the Law; and that not only in his own Person, but that *the Righteousness of the Law might be also fulfilled in us.* Rom. 8. 4.

Let us but soberly consider, *what Christ is?* and we shall the better know, whether *Moral Men* are to be reckoned Christians? What is Christ but *Meekness, Justice, Mercy, Patience, Charity and Virtue in Perfection?* can we then deny a *Meek Man* to be a Christian? a *Just, a Merciful, a Patient, a Charitable and a Virtuous Man* to be like Christ? *By me Kings reign, and Princes decree Justice, saith Wisdom, yea, the wisdom that is from above* (see Prov. 8. 15.) so may I say here, *By Christ men are Meek, Just, Merciful, Patient, Charitable and Virtuous.* And Christians ought to be distinguished by their *likeness to Christ* and not their *Notions of Christ*, by his Holy Qualifications, rather than their own Lofty Professions and Invented Formalities. What shall we say then of that Extravagancy, which those Men are guilty of, who upon hearing a *sober Man* commended, that is not of any great Visible Profession, will take upon them to cast him off with this Sentence; *Tush! he is but a Moral Man: he knows nothing of saving Grace; he may be damn'd for all his Morality.* Nay, some have gone so far, as to say and preach

preach (if not Priat) *That there are Thousands of Moral Men in Hell.*

But 'tis worth our while to consider, that he that sins, is not saved by Grace in that state, and that the *Virtuous Man* is the *Gracious Man*: for 'tis the Nature and End of true Grace, to make Men so. Unanswerable is that Passage of the Apostle, (to the Romans)

Rom. 2. 26, *Therefore if the Uncircumcision keep the*
 27, 28, 29. *Righteousness of the Law, shall not his Uncircumcision be counted for Circumcision: and shall not Uncircumcision which is by Nature, if it fulfil the Law, judge thee, who by the Letter and Circumcision dost transgress the Law? For he is not a Jew, who is one outwardly, neither is that Circumcision, which is outward in the Flesh; but he is a Jew, which is one inwardly, and Circumcision is that of the Heart, in the Spirit, and not in the Letter, whose praise is not of Men, but of God.* So that he that keeps the Law of God and abstains from the Impurity of the World, that is the *good Man*, the *Faithful Liver*; he is the Apostle's true *Jew* and *Circumcision*.

Wherefore it is not ill exprest by that extraordinary Man *J. Hales* of *Eton*: *'The Moral Man* (says he) *is a Christian by the surer Side, that is, Speculations may fail, Notions be mistaken, Forms wither; but Truth and Righteousness will stand the Test: the Man that loves them, will not be moved.* He tells us, *That the Fathers had that Opinion of the Sincerity of the Life of some Heathens, that they believed, God had in Store for such his (even Saving) Grace, and that he would make them Possessors of his Everlasting Kingdom.* And measuring their Satisfaction by the Pleasure I took in reading,

what

what the Author both quotes and Comments upon this Subject, I will venture to transcribe him at large, VIZ.

"Let it not trouble you, (saith he) that I intitle them to some part of our *Christian Faith*, & therefore without Seruple to be received as Weak, and not to be cast forth as Dead. *Salvianus* disputing

J. Hales of Eton, Golden Remains, Of dealing with Erring Christians, pag. 36, 37.

"What Faith is; *Quid est igitur Credulitas vel Fides?* (saith he) *Opinor fideliter hominem Christo credere, id est, Fidelem Deo esse, hoc est, Fideliter Dei mandata servare.* What might this Faith be? (saith he) I suppose, it is nothing else, but Faithfully to believe *Christ*, and this is to be Faithful unto God, which is nothing else, but Faithfully to keep the *Commandments of God*. Not therefore only a bare Belief, but the Fidelity and Trustiness of God's Servants faithfully accomplishing the Will of our Master, is required as a part of our *Christian Faith*.

"Now, all those good things, which *Moral Men* by the *Light of Nature* do, are a part of God's Will written in their Hearts: wherefore so far as they were Conscientious in performing them (if *Salvianus* his Reason be good,) so far have they Title and Interest in our Faith. And therefore *Regulus* that Famous *Roman*, when he endured infinite Torments, rather than he would break his Oath, may thus far be counted a *Martyr* and Witness for the Truth. For the Crown of *Martyrdom* fits not only on the Heads of those, who have lost their Lives,

rather than they would cease to profess the Name of Christ, but on the Head of every one that suffers for the Testimony of a good Conscience and for Righteousness sake.

And here I cannot pass by one very General gross Mistaking of our Age. For in our Discourses concerning the Notes of a *Christian Man*, by what Signs we may know a Man to be one of the *Visible Company of Christ*; we have so tied our selves to this outward Profession, that if we know no other Virtue in a Man, but that he hath Condemn'd his Creed by heart, let his Life be never so prophane, we think it Argument enough for us to account him within the Pale and Circuit of the *Church*. On the Contrary side, let his Life be never so Upright, if either he be little seen in, or peradventure quite ignorant of the Mystery of Christ, we esteem of him but as dead. And those, who conceive well of those *Moral good things*, as of some Tokens giving Hope of Life, we account but as a kind of *Maunderers*, who thought, the very Earth had Life in it. I must confess, that I have not yet made that Proficiency in the Schools of our Age, as that I could see, why the *Second Table* and the Acts of it are not as properly the parts of *Religion* and *Christianity*, as the Acts and Observations of the *First*. If I mistake, than it is *St. James* that hath abus'd me: for he describing *Religion* by its proper Acts, tells us, that *True Religion* *lovethe* *fatherless and the Widow in their Affliction, and to keep himself unspotted of the World*. So that the thing which in an Especial refine *Dialect* of the New *Christian* Language

Language signifies nothing but Morality and Civility, that in the Language of the holy Ghost imports True Religion. Thus far F. Hales.

He hath said so much on this Account, that there is little need, I should say any more; yet give me leave to add: Did Men mind the Language of the Holy Ghost more than their own Conceits, they would not Stile those Moral Men in a way of Disgrace, that are not of their Forms; it would suffice. That those, that fear God and work Righteousness, in all Nations are accepted of him; Acts 11. 34, 35. That Christ himself hath said, He that doth the will of my Father, which is in Heaven, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; and of them that work Iniquity, Depart from me, I know you not.

My Friends, let us not deceive our selves, God will not be mocked; Such as we sow, we shall certainly reap. The Tree is known by its Fruits, and will be Judgd according to its Fruits: The Wages of Sin is Death. Men will find it so; and every Man shall receive his Reward suitable to his Work. For People to talk of Special Grace, and yet be carried away by Common Temptations, it is Provoking to God: but to conceit, that the Righteous God will Indulge his people in that Latitude, which he condemns in other Men, is Abominable. 'Tis Sanctification, that makes the Saint; and Self-Denyal, that constitutes the Christian: and not filling our Heads and Elevaeing our Fancies by applying those Promises to our selves, which as yet we have no Interest in, though we may think they belong to no body else: this Spiritual Flattery of our selves is most pernicious. I cannot but say with

the Apostle: *'Tis neither Circumcision nor Rom. 2. 29. Uncircumcision, Jew nor Gentile. (this nor Gal. 6. 15. t'other thing) but the New Creature created Heb. 12. 14. after Christ Jesus in Holiness: for without Holiness no Man shall ever see the Lord. And what is Holiness, but Abstaining from Wickedness? and what's that, but keeping the Law of God?*
 Psal. 119. *Great Peace have they, that love thy Law,* said 165. *David, that had known the Trouble of Breaking it; Therefore it is, that Grace and Truth is come by Jesus Christ, to help us to fulfill the Law,*
 John 1. *not to Excuse our Disobedience of the Law: And 16, 17. what before we were Unable, this gives us Force to do. So that Christianity is not an Indulgence of people under Weakness and Disobedience, but the Compleating and Perfection of that Righteousness, which without him was but Short and Imperfect, through that Grace and Power that came by Jesus Christ.*

Give me leave, I beseech you, for I have a Godly Jealousy upon me; I fear, lest the very *End of Christ's Coming is Mistaken*: And of how Dreadful a Consequence such a *Mistake* would be, you cannot possibly be Ignorant that believe, there is *No Salvation in another Name*. Let us hear the Testimony of Scripture: They are the Words of Christ himself, *I must Luke 4. preach the Kingdom of God, for therefore am I sent.* Now, what is this *Kingdom of God*, but 43.
 God's Government? and where is this *Kingdom* and ch. 17. 20. Government to be set up, Christ also tells us; *Behold the Kingdom of God is within you.* So that the Reason of his being sent, is to *destroy the Kingdom*

Kingdom and Government of the Devil, the Strong Man, that kept the House, the Heart, and to erect and establish the Kingdom and Government of God in the Soul. Thy Kingdom come, thy will be done. Luk. 11. 2.

Would to God, people would but consider what they Pray for! For they are scandal'd at the thing they ask, and both neglect and revile the Substance of their own Prayers, *Thy Kingdom come, and thy will be done*, but believe neither. It was the Office God designed his Son to.

The Thief John 10. 10. (says Christ) *does not come, but to kill, to*

steal and to destroy: That is; To steal away the Heart from God, and to kill and to destroy all Good Desires and Inclinations in the Soul: for the Devil is this *Thief and Destroyer*. But *I am come*, says Christ, *that they might have Life, and that they might have it more abundantly.* O Death, *will be thy Death*, as if he had said, I will kill that, which kill'd the Soul. I will breath the *Breath of Life* into it again, and by my *Spirit and Grace* I will beget *Holy Motions* and kindle *Heavenly Desires* in it after God, after the *Kingdom of God*, and the *Righteousness* thereof: This is the *Newness of Life*. And I will not only restore that *Life* the Soul has lost, but I will encrease it: I will add to it, that it may have *Life more abundantly.*

Indeed he was Anointed of God for this Purpose, and is therefore called the *Restorer of Paths*, the *Repairer of Breaches* and the *Builder up of waste Places*; that is, he is ordained of God for the Recovery of Man from his *Fallen and Disobedient State*. This is the Reason of his Name: *Then shalt call his Name* Matth. 1. 21. *Jesus* (said the Angel) *for he shall save his*

People

People from their Sins: Not from Wrath only, but from Sin; which is the Cause of Wrath. That is, Of Bad Men he will make them really good Men, and of Sinful and Unholy he will make them Holy and Righteous Men, who truly believe in him. This is the Burden of John's Testimony: *There is one* (says Matth. 3. 11, 12.) *that cometh after me, is mightier than I, he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with Fire; whose Fan is in his hand, & he will THROUGHLY PURGE his Floor.* And seeing Jesus coming to him, said, *Behold the Lamb of God, which TAKETH AWAY the SIN of the world.*

I know the Use, that too many make of these Scriptures, as if they were an *Hebraism* borrow'd from the *Old Sacrifices*: which may be said, *To take away Sin* by taking away the *Guile*; and not, that the *Natures* of Men are restored and perfected. And indeed, this is that Sense, which I dread above all others; because it perverts the *End of Christs Coming*, and lodges Men in a *Security* pernicious to their own Souls. For though it is most true, that *Remission* of Acts 10. 43. *Sins* was and is preached in his Name and Ephes. 1. 7. *Blood*, and that *Sin* in a Sense may be said to be *Taken away*, when the *Guile* of the *Sins* is removed by Remission; yet this is only of *Sins pass*, that upon Repentance are forgiven: But this is not the *Whole*, Full and Evangelical Sense, as Christ's own words do plainly import. For (says he) the Son of Matth. 18. n. *Man is come to save that which was Lost*: Luke 19. 10. *And upon another Occasion he expresseth himself to the same purpose; and almost in the same words, For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which*

which was Lost. Now, who is this that is *Lost*, but *Man*? and in what Sense can *Man* be said to be *Lost*, but by *Sin* and *Disobedience*? that which cast him out of the Presence and Garden of God, and put him in a Condition of *Eternal Misery*. If Christ then came to *Save Lost Man*, he must be understood to *Save* him from that, which puts him into a *Lost Condition*, that is *Sin*; for *The Wages of Sin is Death*, and the *Servant of Sin* is a *Son of Perdition*.

Christ has determin'd this Point beyond all Exception in his Discourse with the *Jews* (*John* 8. 31, 32, 33, 34.) Then said Jesus to those *Jews*, which believed in him, if ye continue in my word, then are ye my Disciples indeed; and ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you Free. What Freedom was this? Certainly from *Sin*; suitable to that passage in *ch. 17. 17.* his Prayer: Sanctify them through thy Truth, thy word is Truth. But some *Jews* present, proud of their Privileges, apprehended not the Liberty Christ spoke of; and therefore answer'd him thus: we are Abraham's Seed, and were never in Bondage to any Man; how sayest thou, Ye shall be made Free? Jesus answered them; Verily, verily, I say unto you, whosoever committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin. In which place it is very remarkable that Men are only to be distinguish'd by their Works, that no Claims, Privileges, Successions or Dissents are available; but He that committeth Sin, is the Servant of Sin. So that Christ's Free Man is he that is Freed from Sin; this is his Follower and Disciple. And as Christ oppos'd the Works of the *Jews*, (who unjustly fought to kill him) to their Pretensions they made to Abraham's Seed; so must

must we oppose the *Actions* of Ill Men to their better *Professions*: we must faithfully tell them, *He that commits Sin, is the Servant of Sin.* From which *Servitude* Christ came to *Save* his people, and is therefore called *The SAVIOUR* and the *REDEEMER*.

This Doctrine is closely followed by the Apostle *Paul* in his *first Chapter* to the *Romans*. Therefore we are buried with him by *Baptism* into *Death*, that like as *Christ* was raised up from the *Dead* by the *Glory* of the *Father*, even so we also should walk in *Newness of Life* — *Knowing* this, that our *Old Man* is crucified with him, that the *Body of Sin* might be destroyed: that henceforth we should not serve *Sin*. — Likewise reckon ye also your selves to be *Dead* indeed unto *Sin*, but alive unto *God* through *Jesus Christ* our *Lord*. As if he had said, *The End of Christ's Coming* is to turn *People* from their *Sins*; and that those, who persist in their *Disobedience*, resist the *Benefits*, that come by him.

Let not *Sin* therefore reign in your mortal *Body*, that ye should obey it in the *Lusts* thereof. Neither yield ye your *Members* as *Instruments of Unrighteousness* unto *Sin*, but yield your selves unto *God*, as those that are *Alive* from the *Dead*, and your *Members* as *Instruments of Righteousness* unto *God*. — Know ye not, that to whom ye yield your selves *Servants* to obey, his *Servants* ye are to whom ye obey, whether of *Sin* unto *Death*, or of *Obedience* unto *Righteousness*. — For when ye were the *Servants* of *Sin*, ye were free from *Righteousness*. What *Fruit* had ye then in those things, whereof ye are now ashamed? for the *End* of those things is *Death*. But now being made free from

from Sin, and become Servants to God, ye have your **FRUIT UNTO HOLINESS**, and the End Everlasting Life. For the Wages of Sin is Death; but the Gift of God is Eternal Life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

To Conclude, nothing can be more apparent, then that *Freedom from Actual Sinning*, and giving *Newness of Life* to the Souls of Men, was the great Reason of *Christs Coming*, and the End for which he hath given us out of his fulness of *Grace and Truth*, and *Grace for Grace*, and that to be under *Grace* and not under the *Law*, is not to have Liberty to do that now, which ought not to have been done before (as the *Ranters* interpret it;) but to be Freed from the *Condemnation* of the Law, First through *Remission of the Sins* that are past upon Faith and Repentance, and next, by *Fulfilling the Righteousness of the Law*, in receiving and obeying the *Light and Grace* that comes by *Jesus Christ*.

Very pertinent is that Passage of the Apostle Paul (to Titus) to our present purpose, for it seems to comprehend the End of *Christs Coming*, the Faith and Duty of his people; which our Great Selden after all his Painful Readings and Curious Inquisitions said but a little before his Death, was the *Most-weighty Passage of the whole Bible to him*, as the Bible was the best of Books in the world, viz: For the Grace of God, that bringeth Salvation, hath appeared Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13, 14. to all Men, teaching us, that denying Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts we should live Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this present World, look in: for that Blessed Hope, and the Glorious Appearing of th: Great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave him'self for us, that

he might redeem us from ALL INIQUITY, and purify unto himself a peculiar people Zealous of Good Works.

In which Comprehensive Passage we find the End of Christ's Coming to be Our Redemption from all Iniquity, both to blot out our Sins that are past, & to purify our Hearts from the Sin that remains. We have the means that works and brings this Salvation into our Souls, which is the Grace; and the Way, by which this Grace doth accomplish it, is by Teaching us to deny Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts, and to live Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this present world. Which has this great Encouragement joyned to it, that those who so live, have only right to look for that blessed Hope and the glorious Appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

I will add the Testimony of his Beloved Disciple John, who has defined to us the End of Christ's Coming thus: *whoever committeth Sin, Transgresseth also the Law; and ye know, that* ¹ John. 3 4, *he was manifested to take away our Sins.* 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10.

And to shew that this is understood not only of the Guilt of Sins past, but of the Nature and present Power of Sin in Man, observe what follows; *whoever abideth in him (Christ) SINNETH NOT.* As if this Apostle had foreseen the present Mischief Christianity labours under both on the side of Evil Men and but too many Mistaken Professors, he adds; *Little Children, let no Man deceive you: he that doth Righteousness is Righteous, even as he is Righteous; he that committeth Sin is of the Devil, for the Devil sinned from the Beginning* [Now comes his most express Passage to the Matter in hand] *For this purpose the Son of God*

God was manifested, that he might DESTROY the Works of the Devil: Which is more than the Remission of Sins that are past; here is the DESTRUCTION of the Power and Kingdom of Satan. They that know not this, know not Christ: for as we, so our Lord is known by his Fruits, by the Works which he works in us; therefore it is said, that *His own Works praise him.*

He therefore that lives in Sin, denyes Christ by denying the End of his Coming: The Fool did not say with his Mouth, but in his Heart, *There is no God;* yet but too many now adays plead with their Tongues and Pens, for Sin Term of Life by endeavouring to shew the Impossibility of overcoming Sin. But what saith this Apostle further of the Business? *whosoever is born of God, doth not commit Sin: In this the Children of God are manifest and the Children of the Devil, whosoever doth not Righteousness, is not of God; neither he that loveth not his Brother. But if you walk in the Light, as God is in the Light, we have fellowship one with another, and the Blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all Sin. Again: He that saith, he abideth in Christ, ought himself also so to walk, even as Christ walked.* Chap. 1. 7. Chap. 2. 6, 14.
A little lower in the same Chapter he says:

I have written unto you Young Men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have OVERCOME the Wicked One.

I will add one Scripture-Testimony more in the present Case, and it is this: *Herein (saith John) is our Love made perfect, that we may* Chap. 4. 17.

have Boldness in the Day of Judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.

Behold now the true End of *Christ's Coming*, viz. To SAVE FROM SIN and to purge us from all Iniquity, that he might present us to God without Spot or Blemish. Let us not then Flatter our selves, for we shall be the Loosers: neither let us make the Impossibility through our Infidelity, which a Grain of Sincere Faith can make not only Possible but Easie: What has been, may be again, nay, in this Case must be: Did the First Christians overcome the *Wicked one*? so must the Last Christians too: were those Ages led by the Holy Spirit and taught by the Grace of God to live God-like, or like God in the World? so must we of these Latter Ages too, if we will be blessed forever; that having put off the Old Man, the Devil and his Works; we may put on Christ the new and heavenly Man, the second Adam, with his Holy Life and Works, so shall the Fruits of his Spirit shine through us, which are Love, Joy, Gal. 5. 22, Peace, Long-suffering, Patience, Gentleness, 23. Faith, Meekness, Temperance; for they that are Christ's have Crucified the Flesh, with the Affections and Lusts: They hear his Voice John 10. 4, that leads them out of the Concupiscencies 5. 27. of this Vile World, and they follow him, and he gives unto them Eternal Life, and a Stranger they will not follow: The World, the Flesh and the Devil make up this Stranger, and those that are carried away by this Stranger are in an Unreconciled State to God, and so dying must inevitably perish. VVell, then will

will be true Christians? Have we *Faith*, then let us take the Advice of that good man *Peter*; Let us add to our *Faith* *Virtue*, and to *Virtue* *Knowledge*, and to *Knowledge* *Temperance*, and to *Temperance* *Patience*, and to *Patience* *Godliness*, and to *Godliness* *Brotherly-Kindness*, and to *Brotherly-Kindness* *Charity*: For says he, if these things be in you and abound, they make you, that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the *Knowledge* of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his Old Sins. Wherefore the rather Brethren, give Diligence, to make your Calling and Election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall. For so an Entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the Everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*. 2 Pet. 1. 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11. (

The Fourth Great Ecclesiastical Evil, is Preferring
HUMANE AUTHORITY above Reason
 and Truth.

This & the next Evil (which is the Last now to be considered, to wit, *Propagation of Faith by Force, Religion by Arms*) are the *Two Legs*, upon which the false Church hath in all Ages, under this degeneracy we find the Jewish Church at Christ's coming, and he complains of it, *Ye teach for Doctrines the Traditions of men, ye seek to kill me, a man that has told you the Truth*: But I challenge the whole Account of Time and Records of the World, which are come to the hands of this Age, to tell me, *When, where and by whom* these Principles

Principles have been receiv'd, improv'd and us'd with any sort of Proportion or Comparison, with the Practice of that Church, which has long prided her self with the Name of *Catholick* and *Christian*. And yet I could wish nothing of these *Two Ill Principles* had found any place amongst us, that call our selves *Protestants*; for to them are properly owing most of that *Ignorance Superstition, Idolatry, Animosity, Persecution and Blood-shed* that have been among *Christians*, since the *Christian Profession* hath grown to any Power in the World. I shall consider them severally (respecting us) and in their due Order, with as much Brevity, as well I can.

That *Humane Authority* hath been preferred above *Reason and Truth*, that is, That the Apprehensions, Interpretations, Conclusions and Injunctions of Men have been reputed the great Necessaries or Essentials to Salvation and *Christian Communion*, inasmuch as a Sober and Reasonable Dissent hath been too often over-rul'd not by VVeight of *Argument* or Evidence of *Truth*, but by the Power and Numbers of Men in Ecclesiastical Office and Dignity, is (that I may say Modestly) in some Degree true among us. The *First Church-Evil* reprehended in this Discourse, may begin the Proof, and give the first Witness upon this part of the Charge, viz. That *OPINIONS* have been made *ARTICLES of Faith*, that is, the *CONSTRUCTIONS and CONCLUSIONS of MEN* from Sacred *Writ*, and not the *TEXT* it self have been enjoyn'd & impos'd as *ESSENTIAL* to *Eternal Salvation* and *External Christian Communion*. Inasmuch as no Reason, Scripture or purest Antiquity have suffer'd to prevail

prevail | against such Determinations, and too often not enough to excuse those, that have pleaded for a *Conscientious Dissent* from them; the Authors of them either resting upon the Authority of their own Judgments, or conforming themselves to the Example of Ages less pure and clear.

I Conscientiously refuse to name *Parties*, because I am tender of giving the least Offence; but upon a Just Observance of those Revolutions of Protestantcy, that have been amongst us, we may see, with what Stiffness (not to say *Obstinacy*) several *Models* of Religion and Draughts of *Creeeds* have been contended for. I would beseech every *Party* in Christ's Name to look into it self, for I don't, because such are best able (if they will be Impartial and put no Cheat upon themselves) to make the Application. However I will name those Points, about which the Authority of Man as it seems to me has been so Positive of God, as to his Prescience and Predetermination; Of *Christ*, as to his Natures and Personality, and the Extent of his Death and Intercession; Of *Free Will* and *Grace*; Of *Faith* and *Works*; Of *Perseverance* and *Falling away*; Of the Nature of the *Church*; And Lastly, of the *Dignity* and *Power* of the *Clergy*.

And if men please but to lay their Hands upon their Hearts, and cast their Eyes upon the Scriptures, if they will but use the *Light* that God has afforded them, and bring such Debates and Results to the Test of that Light and the *Sound Form of Words*, the *Holy Ghost* hath preserv'd amongst us; I need not take the Employment upon me of pointing to *Humane Authority* among the several *Parties* of *Protestants* as to these points;

points; nothing will be clearer. For it is about the *Meaning* of this and the *Intention* of that place of Scripture the Contest hath been and is; and how to maintain and propagate those Conceits; So that the falling out is in the Wood of our own Opinions, and there the Contention is kindled, that consumes all about our Ears. O that we would be but impartial and see our *over-plus* to the Scriptures, and retrench that redancy or keep it modestly! for 'tis an horrid thing that we *Protestants* should assume a Power of ranging our apprehensions with the Text, and in-joining our Imaginations for Indispensible Articles of Faith and Christian Communion.

But the next proof of the prevalency of *Humane Authority* amongst us *Protestants* is *The great Power and Sway of the Clergy, and the Peoples Reliance upon them for the Knowledge of Religion, and the Way of Life and Salvation.* This is such plain Fact, that almost every *Parish* proves it. Is not *Prophecy* (once the Church's) now engross'd by them and wholly in their hands? Who dare publicly *preach* or *pray*, that is not of that *Class* or *Order*? Have not they only the *Keys* in keeping? May any body else pretend to the Power of *Absolution* or *Excommunication*? much less to constitute *Ministers*? Are not all *Church Rites* and *Priviledges* in their Custody? don't they make it their proper Inheritance? Nay, so much larger is their *Empire* then *Cæsars*, that only they begin with *Births* and end with *Burials*: Men must pay them for *Coming in* and *Going out* of the World. *To pay for dying* is hard! Thus their *Profits* run to the *Grave*, and that which is the

the *Loss* of others, is their *Gain*, and a part of their *Revenue*.

'Tis of this great *Order* and *Sept* of Men only, that all *Synods* and *Convocations* are (of modern Ages) compounded; and what they determin, is called the *Canons* or *Decrees* of the *Church*; though Alas! they be only to *Obe*y, what they *Ordain*; giving us thereby to understand, that they want the *Authority* of her *Name*, where they deny her to have a part, or to be present.

But they have not only been the Usual *Starters* of new *Opinions*, and the great *Creed-Makers* among Christians; but the *Sway* they have with the *People*, makes them so Considerable an *Interest* in the *Eyes* of the *Civil Magistrate*, that he often finds it not for his *Ends* to disoblige them. Upon this it is, we see them so Successful in their Solicitations of *Publick Authority* to give its *Sanction* to their *Opinions* and *Forms*; and not only recommend them (which goes certainly a great way with the *People*) but impose the *Reception* of them, and that on severe *Penalties*; in so much, that either men must offer up their understandings to their *Fears*, and *dissemble Conviction* to be safe, or perish; there is no medium. Something of this lies near us: God Almighty open our *Eyes* to see both the *Truth* and *Mischief* of this thing.

But what shall I say of that *Implicit Reverence* the people have for the *Clergy* and dependence upon them about *Religion* and *Salvation*, as if they were the only *Trustees* of *Truth*, and high *Treasurers* of *Divine Knowledge* to the *Laity*: and we daily see, that the blind *Opinion* they have of their *Office* (as that which

is peculiar to that order and not common to Christians, be their *Gifts* as they will) disposes them to rely entirely upon their Performances. The *Minister* is *Chooser* and *Taster* and every thing for them: They seem to have deliver'd up their Spiritual SELVES, and made over the business of Religion, the *Rights* of their *Souls* to their *Pastor*, and that scarcely with any *Limitation* of Trust too: and as if he were, or could be their *Garante* in t'other World, they become very insollicitous of any further *Search*. So that if we would examine the respective *Parishes* of *Protestant* as well as *Papish* Countries, we shall find (and it is come to that sad pass) that very few have any other *Religion* than the *Tradition* of their *Priest*: They have given up their Judgment to him, and seem greatly at their *Base*, that they have discharged themselves of the Trouble of *Working out their own Salvation* and *Proving all things*, that they might hold fast that which is good. And in the room of that care bequeath'd the charge of those Affairs to a *Standing Pensioner* for the purpose.

Thus the Clergy are become a sort of *Mediators* between Christ and us, that as we must go to God by Christ, so must we come to Christ by them; they must be, it seems, like the *high Priests* under the Law, that only enter'd into the *Holy of Holies*, whose *Lips presented Knowledge*: and by whom we must understand a *Divine Oracle*. As if the *Mysteries of Salvation* are not to be intrusted with the *Vulgar*, or that it were a kind of *Prophanation* to expose them to their *View*: and the only way to make them *cheap* and *contemptible* to suffer *Every Christian* to have the keeping of them: (though

(though they belong to every Christian.) But this Language (thanks be to God) is that of humane Authority, that would magnify the *Mysteries of Salvation* by the Ignorance of those, that should know them, as if the *Gospel-dispensation* were not that of a full Age, but *Infancy* or *Minority*.

'Tis true, the State of people under the *Law* and the *Levitical Priest-hood* is called a *Bondage*, *Childhood* and *Minority*, and the Law thereof is term'd a *School-master* to bring to Christ; but it is as *Gal. 3.* true, that the State of Christianity is reputed the *Age of grace, freedom, manhood* and *Inheritance* by the same Apostle. And that we should have external *Guardians* of our *Faith* and *Religion* upon us after we are come to *Years of Discretion*, that might be very allowable under the *smoother Age* of our *Minority*, is not to obtain greater *Freedom*, but to make our Case worse. For it is more tolerable to be used as *Children* when we are *Children*, and know nothing above that Condition, then when *riper Years* have brought us to the Understanding and *Resentment of Men*. But it is almost as unpardonable as it is unsufferable, to make that *Infancy* the *Persecution* of the *Christian-Religion*, as if there were nothing beyond wearing a *Bib* and being fed, carried and govern'd as *Nurses please*; that is, as the *Priests will*. It is a *Knowing* and *Reasonable*, and not a blind *Obedience*, that commends a *Man*; *Children* should be ruled, because they have no Understanding or *Choice*; but because 'tis not so with *Men*, *Reason* ought to conduct them in their Duty, that the *Service* they perform to God may be such, as the Apostle calls, a *Reasonable one*: The *Will* is no longer *Will* if

not *Free*, nor *Conscience* to be reputed *Conscience*, where compell'd. The *Gospel* is not the time of Ceremonial Works but *Faith*, therefore not Coercive, because out of our own power; it is the *Gift* of *God*.

But though this be very unhappy, that so excellent a Reformation, founded upon the freest Principles of Inquiry, common to all that had Souls to save, should so miserably degenerate into *Formality* and *Ignorance*, *Implicit Faith* and *blind Obedience*; yet that part of our History is most lamentable to me, where we find the *Noble Bereans*, the diligent Inquirers, People that desire to *prove all things*, that they may *hold fast that which is good*, such as would see with their own Eyes, and that dare not transfer the right of Examination to any mortal man, but who desire to make their *Faith* and *Religion*, the *Faith* and *Religion* of their *Conscience* and *Judgment*, that on which they dare depend and rest their *eternal Happiness* in the Day of *Judgment*, that, these I say, should instead of being cherisht, be therefore exposed to the *Displeasure* of the Clergy, the *Scorn* of the *Rude Multitude*, and the *Prosecution* of the Civil Magistrate: this I confess is very anxious to remember, and I only do it for this purpose, that it may put us in mind of our great Declension from *Primitive Protestantism*, and how much *Humane Authority* has crept into the Affairs of *Religion* since that time of the day, when we made it a prime Article of our *Protestant Creed* to eject and renounce it. And that you may yet see your selves short of your own Pretences, if not contrary to your express Principles, and how much you have narrowed your selves from the use of your *First Principles*.

Suppose

Suppose a *Turk* be convinced, that Christ is that, which he believed *Mahomet* to be, the *Greatest of all Prophets*, That *Mahomet* was an Impostor, That *Jesus* is the only Saviour and Mediator; but being Catechistically taught the *Two Natures* in one Person (the *Hypostatical Union*) in fine, the *Athanasian Creed* and other *Articles of Faith*, or Rites of your Church not so clearly express'd in Scriptures, and not easie to be apprehended or assented to, will not this poor Creature be look'd upon either as Infidel or Heretick? renounced all share in Christ and Christian Fellowship, because his Weakness or Understanding will not allow him to come up to the full Inventory of Articles believed and imposed by you? Certainly you must either be partial, and give him that Liberty you deny to Persons of equal Tenderneſs, or else you must alter your present straightneſs conclude him Infidel or Heretick. But I would beseech you that we may consider if this bears any Proportion with the Wisdom and Love of God, in sending Christ into the World to save you and me?

The Apostle *became All unto all to win some*; but this is *becoming All unto none, to force all*: he thereby recommends the *Utmost Condescension* that can be lawful; but this use of Humane Authority about Faith seems to make it unlawful to Condescend: As if *Force* were better than Love, and Conformity (how ever it become at it) than *Christian Condescension*.

The Blessed Apostle had his Eye to the Good Intention and Sober Life of the Weak; and used an holy sort of Guile to catch them: he seems, as if he assembled the Knowledge of those *Averse Opinions* which

which they held, or the necessity of their embracing those Doctrines, which as yet they might not believe. He fell not to Debate and Canvass Points in Difference between them, which instead of Union would have enflam'd the Difference and rais'd Contention; No, no: *He became all unto all*, that is, He stoop'd to all Capacities, and humbled himself to those Degrees of Knowledge that men had, and valued that which was good *in all*, and with this Sweetness he practis'd upon them to their further proficiency in the School of Christ. These Allurements were all his Injunctions, nay, in this Case he makes it an Injunction to use no other: *Let us therefore* Phil. 3. (says he) *as many as be perfect be thus minded;* 15. *and if in any thing ye be OTHERWISE minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.* You shall not be impos'd upon, stigmatiz'd or excommunicated for Want of Full Satisfaction, or because you do not Consent before Conviction; for *God shall REVEAL it to you*; you shall see and know what you do, and to God you shall owe your Knowledge and *Conformity*, and not to *Humane Authority and Imposition*: your Faith shall not be implicit, nor your Obedience blind, the Reason of your Hope shall be in you.

Pray let us compare this with the *Language* of our own Times; where People cannot come up to the Prescriptions of men, but plead the Liberty of Dissent (though with never so much Sobriety and true Tenderness of Conscience) they are upbraided after this manner, *Are you wiser than your Superiours? Were our Fore-Fathers out of the Way? Did no body know the Truth till you came? Are you Wiser than all our Ministers and* Bishops

Bishops and your Mother the Church? Can't it content you to believe as she believes? Is not this Pride and Presumption in you, a Design to make and head Sects and Parties? with the like Entertainment.

Now this is that which you your selves, at least in the Persons of your Ancestors have stiled **POPERY**; yea, **POPERY** in the abstract, the Sum-Total of that Mystery its great Master piece, to wit, **IMPLICIT FAITH** and **BLIND OBEDIENCE**: If so? then say I, let us also have a care of *Popery* in *Protestant* guise; for that *Popery* is likely to do us most Injury that is least suspected. I beg you by the Love of God and Truth, and as you would lay a sure Foundation Piece here, and eternal Comfort to your own Souls, that you would consider the Tendency of upbraiding and violently overruling the Dissent of Conscientious and Peaceable People: For if you will Rob me once of the Liberty of my Choice, the Use of my Understanding, the Distinction of my Judgment, no Religion comes amiss; indeed it leads to No Religion. 'Twas the Saying of the Old King to the then Prince of Wales and our present King; *Make the Religion of your Education the Religion of your Judgment*: which to me is of the Nature of an Appeal from his Education to his Judgment about the Truth of his Religion: And that Religion, which is too tender to be examin'd is unsound. *Prove all things, and hold fast that which is good*, lies an Impeachment against Imposition, deliver'd upon Record by the Apostle Paul in the Name of the Holy Ghst. 'Twas the same Apostle, that commended the Bereans of Old, for that they diligently searched the Scriptures; whether

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those things delivered by the Apostles concerning the Messiah, were true.

Nay, Christ himself to whom all power was given in Heaven and in Earth, submitted himself to the Test: he did not require them to believe him, because he would be believed; he refers them to the

Witness, that God bore to him: *If I bear John 5. 31, witness of my self, my Witness is not true.*

32, 37, 39. He also sends them to the Scriptures, pleads the Truth of his Authority from that of his

Doctrine and Miracles: If I had not done among them the Works which none other Man

did. And finally challenges them to convince him

but of *one Sin: Which of you convinceth Ch. 8. 46, me of Sin? and if I say the Truth, why do ye*

not believe me? He offers to reason the Matter, and submit himself to Truth; and well he might, who was Truth it self.

But an **IMPOSING CHURCH** bears Witness of her self, and will be both Party and Judge: it requires Assent without Evidence and Faith without Proof, therefore false; Christian Religion ought to be carried on only by that way by which it was introduced, which was **PERSUASION**; *If any man will be my Disciple, let him take up his Cross and follow me: and this is the Glory of it, that it does not destroy, but fairly conquer the Understanding.*

I am not unacquainted with the Pretences of Romanists to Abnegation to a Mortified and Self denying Life; and I do freely acknowledge, that the Author of the *German Theology*, Taulerus and Thomas a Kempis, and others of that sort of Men in their

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Communion, have written Excellent Practical Things, but there is scarcely any thing of this Violent *Popery* in those Tracts: On the contrary, the very Nature and Tendency of them is Diametrically Opposit to the present Constitution of that Church, and all others that practise Imposition in Religion.

And as it is one great Mark of the False Church to pervert the right End of True Doctrine, so hath she excelled in the Abuse of that Excellent Word SELF-DENYAL: For she hath translated it from *Life to Understanding*, from Morals to Faith, *Subjugare intellectum in Obsequium fidei* (to subject the Understanding to the Obedience of Faith) is the perpetual Burden of their Song, and Conclusion of their Conferences. But what is this *Faith*? that which conquers the World and purifies the Heart? by no means. But 'tis to believe that the Church of *Rome* is the True Church, and the Pope Christ's Vicar, and the Visible Head of that Church.

So as that *Self denyal*, which relates to our Wills and Affections in a corrupt State, they apply to the Use of our Understanding about Religion, as if it were the same thing to deny that which we understand and know to be Evil (which is the *Christian Self denyal*) and to deny that very Knowledge and Understanding, which is God's Gift and our Honour. Whereas Religion and Reason are so Consistent, as that Religion can neither be understood nor maintain'd without Reason. For if this must be laid aside, I am so far from being Infallibly assured of my Salvation, that I am not capable of any Measure of Good from Evil, Truth from Falshood. Why? I have

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no understanding or use of any, which is the same. All the Disadvantage the *Protestant* is under in this is that, of his greater Modesty, and that he submits his Belief to be tryed, which the other refuses, under the Pretence of unaccountable Infallibility to that Authority Reason decides.

So that whereas some people excuse their embracing of that Religion by urging the *Certainty* that is in it, I do say, 'Tis nothing but *Presumption*. For a man can never be *Certain* of that, about which he has not the Liberty of Examining, Understanding or Judging: *Confident* (I confess) he may be, but that's quite another thing than being *Certain*.

Yet I must never deny, but that every Christian ought to believe as the Church believes, provided the Church be true; but the Question is, Which is that *true Church*? And when that is answered; as a Man may Unlawfully Execute a Lawful Sentence, so he may falsely believe as the *True Church* believes; for if I believe, what she believes, only because she believes it, and not because I am convinced in my Understanding and Conscience of the Truth of what she believeth, my Faith is false, though hers be true: I say, it is not true to me, I have no Evidence of it.

What is this *Church*, or *Congregation* rather (as worthy Tindal every where translates it) but a *Company of People agreed together in the sincere Profession and Obedience of the Gospel of Christ*. Now look what Inducement they severally had to believe and embrace the Gospel, that we must have to join with them: for as they made not one another an *infallible Authority*

riety to one another, upon which they first embrac'd the Gospel; neither are we to ground our Belief there- of upon *their Authority jointly*; but as they had a Rule to believe and commune, so must we have the *same Rule* to embrace their Communion. So that that Church cannot be the Rule of my Faith, that have the same Faith and Object for my Faith that she has. I argue thus,

I must believe as the Church believes, that is, I must have the same Faith the Church has; then I must have the same Rule, because the Church can be no more the Rule of that Faith, then she can be that Faith of which some would make her the Rule. If then the Church has Faith, and that Faith a Rule, and that she can no more be the Rule of her own Faith, then she can be that Faith it self, it follows, she cannot be the Rule of the Faith of her Members, because those Members have the same Faith, and that they in Society are this Church. For that which is the Rule of the Congregation's Faith in general, must reasonably be the Rule of every Member's Faith that makes up that Congregation; and consequently of every Member that may hereafter adhere to it. So that *to talk of believing as the Church believes; to flourish upon that Self-denial and Humility, which takes all upon Trust, and revile those with the bitterest Invektives that are modestly scrupulous, and all the BEREANS; for their Souls* (who think that Easiness of Nature and Condescension might be better bestowed, and in this occasion ill-tim'd and dangerous) *is to put the Knife to the Throat of Protestancy; and what in them lies to sacrifice it to implicit Faith and blind Obedience.* For it

cannot be denied but that the great Foundation of our Protestant Religion is the *Divine Authority of the Scriptures from without us, and the Testimony and Illumination of the Holy Spirit within us.* Upon this foot the first Reformers stood, and made and maintain'd their Separation from Rome, and freely offer'd up their innocent Lives in Confirmation. With good Cause therefore it is the general Consent of all sound Protestant Writers, *That neither Traditions, Councils nor Canons of any visible Church, much less the Edicts of any Civil Session or Jurisdiction, but the Scriptures only, interpreted by the Holy Spirit in us, give the final Determination in Matters of Religion, and that only in the Conscience of every Christian TO HIMSELF.* Which Protestation made by the first publick Reformers against the Imperial Edicts of Charles the fifth imposing Church Traditions without Scripture Authority, gave first beginning to the Name of *Protestant*, and with that Name hath ever been received this Doctrine, *which prefers the divine Authority of the Scripture and Spirit to that of the Church and her Traditions.* And if the Church is not sufficient implicitly to be believed, as we hold it is not, what can there else be named of more force with us, but the Divine Illumination in the Conscience, or Conscience in the best Sense of the Word, then which God only is greater. But if any man shall pretend that the Scripture judges according to his Conceptions or Conscience for other men, and that they must take their Religious Measures by the Line of his Direction; such a person makes himself greater then either Church, Scripture or Conscience.

And,

1 John
3. 20.

And, pray, let us consider if in any thing the Pope is by our Protestant Divinity so justly resembled to Antichrist, as in assuming Infallibility over Conscience and Scripture to determine as he thinks fit; and so in effect to give God, Scripture, Magistrates and Conscience the Law. To this they have without scruple applyed that to the *Thessalians*, *Sitting in the Temple of God, exalting himself above all that is called God.* 2 Thess. 2. 4.

To check this exorbitancy, the Apostle *Paul* demands, *Who art thou that judgest anothers Servant? to his own Lord he stands or falls;* which sheweth with great Evidence that Christians of all sizes, great and small, are but Brethren, and consequently all superiority, Lordship and Imposition are excluded; But if there be a Difference 'tis in this, that as Christ taught, *He that is greatest, is to be Servant to the rest;* but what is more opposite to a Servant then a Lord, and to Service then Injunction and Imposition, and that on Penalties too? Here it is that Christ is only Lord and Lawgiver, who is only King of this inward Kingdom of the Soul: And 'tis to be noted that the Apostle did not write this to a private Brother, or in some special Case, but to the Church, as a General and standing Truth, and therefore now as Authentick and proper as then: And if this be true, I cannot see how any, or even the most part of the Church, that are still but Brethren to the rest, of one voluntary Communion and Profession, can with any shew of Reason impose upon them and escape the Reproof of this Scripture; *for all Societies are to govern themselves according to their Institution and first Principles* of

of Union. Where there is Violence upon this part, *Tyranny and not Order is introduced.* Now since Per-
 asion and Conviction began all true Christian So-
 ciety, all Christian Societies must uphold themselves
 upon the same free Bottom, *or they turn Antichristian.*
 I beseech you here, let us examine our selves faith-
 fully, and I am of belief that something of this will yet
 appear amongst us, that shew great Reverence to that
 free Name.

But to make good their unreasonable conceit of
Church Authority, they object Christ's Words, **GO
 TELL THE CHURCH**, that is, say they, *The
 Church is the Rule and guide of Faith, whatever the Church
 agrees upon and requires your assent to and Faith in, that
 you must necessarily believe.* But though, as before,
 'tis confest in a sense we must believe as the true
 Church believes, yet not because she so believes, but
 for the same Reasons that she her self does so believe,
 because none can truly believe as she believes, but
 must so do upon the same principles and motives, for
 which they believ'd that first made up that Christian
 Church: To talk of being the *Rule and Guide* in
 point of Faith, is to contradict Scripture, and justle
 Christ out of the Office which is peculiar to him and

his Spirit; he is given to his Church as
 * *Isaiah 6.* *Head*, that is, a *Counsellor*, a *Ruler*, a *Judge*,
 - *Rom. 8:14.* and is called a *Lawgiver*; and says the Apo-
 stle, *The Children of God are led by the Spirit of God.*
And he was wisdom and Righteousness to the Church A-
postolick, and is so to his own Church all the World
 over. Besides, 'tis absurd that the Church can be
 the Rule and Guide of Faith, for as such, *she must be*
her

her own Rule and Guide, the Faith of the Members being that of the Church, which cannot be.

But what then can be the meaning of Christs words, *Go tell the Church?* Very well. I answer, 'tis not about *Faith*, but *Injury*; that Christ speaks, and the place explains it self, which is this:

Moreover, if thy Brother shall TRESPASS a- Matth. 18. 15,
16, 17, 18.
gainst thee, go and tell him his fault, be-

tween thee and him alone (here is *Wrong*, not *Religion*; *Injustice*, not *Faith* or *Conscience* concerned, as some would have it, to maintain their Church power) *if he shall hear thee, thou hast gain'd thy Brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established; and if he shall neglect to hear them, TELL IT UNTO THE CHURCH; but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an Heathen man and a Pn'lican. Verily I say unto you, whatever ye shall bind on Earth, shall be bound in Heaven, and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth, shall be loosed in Heaven, &c.* The matter & manner of which passaged deliver'd by Christ shews that he intended not to set up Church power about *Faith* and *Worship*, unto which all must bow, even without; if not against conviction. The word **TRESPASS** and **FAULT**, prove abundantly that he only means private and personal Injuries, and that not only from the undeniable signification and use of the word **TRESPASS** and **FAULT**, but from the way Christ commands for accommodation, viz. that the person wrong'd do speak to him that commits the Injury alone, if that will not do, that he take one or two with him; but no man can think that if it related to *Faith* & *Worship*.

Worship, I ought to receive the Judgment of one, or two or three against mine own. This has not been the practice, at least not the principle of the most degenerated Church since the Primitive times; for most, if not all agree, *that nothing below the Church can determine about matters of Faith*, and even many with reason cannot go so far: yet Christ seems to fix a blame upon him that complies not with the Person he has offended, but more if he refuse to give satisfaction, after one or two have also intreated him; therefore it cannot relate to matters of Faith and scruples of Conscience, *but personal and private Injuries*: Which is yet clearer from this part of Christ's saying, viz. *That in the Mouth of two or three Witnesses every Word may be established*. Which Implies a *Trial* and *Judicial* proceeding as is customary in civil cases, about personal and private Trespasses; for it were not so proper to speak of Witnesses on any other account. This is interpreted beyond exception by the *Apostle* 1 Cor. 6. 1, 2. to the *Corinthians*, where he reproves and forbids them, *to go to Law one with another before Unbelievers*, arguing thus, *Do you not know that the Saints shall Judge the World, and if the World shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters?* This shews the meaning of Church Authority is those dayes, and is a natural Exposition upon Christ's words (in case of Trespass and Refractoriness) *Tell the Church*. And 'tis yet the Practice of all sober, just and quiet People, rather to refer their Controversies to approved men, than to tare one another to pieces at Law.

But it is worth our notice that as any Decision up

on an arbitration obliges only the Parties to sit down content with the awardment of such *loss or gain* as they the Arbitrators think equal (as the next best way to accommodate differences, and not that such awardment should alter their first Thoughts and Opinion they had of their right, or force them to declare they are of the Arbitrators mind.) So is it most unreasonable, where the Church is only an Arbitrator about Personal trespasses or umpire at most, to imagine a Power to determine and impose Faith, and that upon severe Penalties as well of this (unto which Christ's Church has no relation) as of the other World; I say, this very thing well weigh'd breaks all their Fallacies to pieces, and decides the business beyond all contradiction between those that stand upon *the Spirit within and the Scripture without* on the one hand, and such as meerly rest upon *the Traditions of Men and Authority of the Church* on the other hand. For if in an Arbitration I am not bound to be of the Arbitrators mind, though for Peace sake I submit to their Award, and that the Church Power in this place controverted relates only to external and personal Trespasses, Injuries or Injustices, as the place it self plainly proves, there can be no sense, reason or modesty in the Earth, on the part of those high Church men, who would from hence wring and extort the Power of *defining, resolving and imposing upon all people, under temporal and eternal punishment, Articles of Faith and Bonds of Christian Communion.*

I Conclude this of the Church with saying, that 'tis not *Identity of Opinion*, but *Justice*, not *Religious Uniformity*, but *Personal Satisfaction* that concerns the rest,

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and therefore Reason, (6ber. Conscience and good Sense may at any time lawful insist upon their claim to be heard in all their Scruples or Exceptions without disrespect to that excellent Doctrine (when rightly understood) *Go tell the Church.*

To this let me add something about this great Word CHURCH. Some men think they are sure enough if they can but get *within the pale of the Church*, that have not yet consider'd what it is. The Word CHURCH, signifies any Assembly, so the *Greeks* used it; and it is by Worthy Tindal every where translated *Congregation*. It has a two fold sense in Scripture. The first and most excellent Sense is that, in which she is called the *Body* and *Bride* of Christ. In this respect she takes in all Generations, and is made up of the Regenerated, be they in Heaven or on Earth, thus *Ephes. 1. 22. 5. 23. 10 33. Col. 1. 16. 17. 18. Heb. 12. 22, 23. Rev. 21. 2. Chap. 22. 17.* Here Christ only can be Head; this Church is washed from all Sin, not a Spot nor a Wrinkle left; all men have nothing to do with this Church, within whose pale only is Salvation; nor is this Universal and truly *Catholic* Church capable of being conven'd to be told of Wrongs or Trespases. The other use of that Word in Scripture is alwayes referred to Particular Assemblies and Places, that is the *Church*, which by Christ's Doctrine is to be told of Personal Injuries, and whose determination for Peace sake is to be adhear'd to, must of necessity be the adjacent or most contiguous company of Christian Believers, those to whom the Persons in difference are by external Society and Communion related; and that such private and distinct Assemblies

are

are so called the Church, is apparent from the acts and writings of the Apostles: the Church of *Jerusalem, Antioch, Corinth, Ephesus, Galatia, Thessalonica, Crete, &c.* peruse these places, *Acts* 5. 11. & 9. 31. & 11. 32, 26. & 14. 23, 27. *Rom.* 16. 5. *1 Cor.* 1. 2. & 4. 17. & 14. 4. *Rev.* 2. & 3. Chap. By which it plainly appears that the Universal visible Church, so much bragg'd of for the Rule and Judge of Faith, &c. is an upstart thing, and like mean Families or ill got Goods, it uses false Heraldry to give it a Title.

For the Apostolick times, to which all others must vail and by whom they must be tryed, know no such conceit, and the Truth is, it was then first started, when the Pride of one man made him ambitious, and his Power able to bid for *Headship, Empire and Sovereignty*; 'twas then needful to his being *Universal head*, that he should first have an *Universal body*. But suppose such a Church there were, 'tis utterly Impossible that such a Church could be called together in any one place, or at any one time to be told or to determine of any thing, so that yielding the thing by them desired, it is useless and impracticable to the ends they desire it for. But alas! who knows not, that loves not to be blind, that the Church among them is the *Priesthood*, the few cunning men govern the Majority, and intitle their conceits, the *Canons of Christ's Church*, and humane Power and Force, the Policy and Weapons of this world, must back their decrees. And all this comes from the Ignorance and Idleness of the People, that give the Pride and Industry of the Clergy an opportunity to effect their crafts upon them. For so mean spirited are the People as to

take all upon trust for their Souls, that would not trust an *Arch-Bishop* about a *little Great*.

'Tis prodigious to think what *Veneration* the *Priesthood* have rais'd to themselves by their usurpt Commission of Apostleship, their pretended Successions, and their CLINK CLANK of extraordinary Ordination. *A Priest, a God on Earth, a Man that has the Keys of Heaven and Hell; do as he says, or be damn'd;* what power like to this? The Ignorance of the People of their Title and Pretences, have prepared them to deliver up themselves into their hands, like a Crafty Usurer, that hedges in the Estate on which he has a Mortgage; and thus they make themselves ever in Fee to the Clergy, and become their proper *Patrimony*. So that believing as the Church believes, is neither more nor less then Rooking men of their Understandings, or doing as ill Gamesters are wont to do, get by using false Dice. Come, come, 'tis believing as the Priesthood believes, which made way for that offence wise and good men have taken against the Clergy in every Age: And did the People examine their bottom, the ground of their Religion and Faith, it would not be in the Power of their Leaders to cause them to Err; an implicit Veneration to the Clergy begun the Misery! What! Doubt my Minister! arraign his Doctrine, put him to the Proof! by no means; but the Consequence of not doing it has been the Introduction of much false Doctrine Superstition and Formality, which gave just occasion for Schism (for the Word has no hurt in it; and implies only a Separation, which may as well be right as wrong.)

But

But that I may not be taxed with partiality or upbraided with singularity, there are two Men, whose Worth, Good Sense and True Learning I will at any time engage against an entire Convocation of another Judgment, viz. *Jacobus Acontius* and *John Hales* of *Eaton*, that are of the same mind; who, though they have not writ much, have writ well and much to the purpose. I will begin with *Jacobus Acontius* at large, and do heartily beseech my Readers to be more then ordinarily intent in reading what I cite of him, their Care and Patience will be requited by his Christian and very acute Sense.

‘It remains, that we speak of such Causes of the
 ‘not perceiving, that a Change of Doctrine is introduced, as consist in the Persons that are taught. Now
 ‘they are chiefly two, Carelesness and Ignorance.
 ‘Carelesness for the most part ariseth hence, In that
 ‘the people trust too much to their Pastors; and persuade themselves, that they will not slip into any
 ‘Error, and that therefore they have small need to
 ‘have an Eye over them, but that they are bound rather to embrace whatsoever they shall hold forth,
 ‘without any curious Examination. Hereunto may
 ‘be added many other busineses, whereunto men
 ‘addi@ themselves: For that Saying is of large extent, *Where mens Treasure is, there is their Heart*, and
 ‘that other, *No man can serve two Masters*. Now,
 ‘how it may come to pass that after a people hath
 ‘once had a great Knowledge of Divine Truths, the
 ‘said Knowledge may as it were vanish away, besides
 ‘that Cause which hath been even now alleadged,
 ‘we

' we shall in another place make discovery of some o-
 ' ther Reasons. We shall for the present add only
 ' this one; That the people themselves are in a per-
 ' petual kind of Mutation, some daily dying and de-
 ' parting, others succeeding and growing up in their
 ' stead. Whence it comes to pass, That since the
 ' Change which is made in every Age, is small, ei-
 ' ther the people cannot perceive it; or if they do ob-
 ' serve it, yet they esteem it not of such moment, as
 ' to think fit to move any Difference thereabout.
 ' This thing also is of very great force, to keep the
 ' people from taking notice of a Change in Doctrine;
 ' when men shall perswade themselves, that they are
 ' not able to judge of matters of Religion, as though
 ' *it is, it is not*, and other words used in Scripture, do
 ' not signifie the same which they do in common dis-
 ' course, or as if nothing could be understood without
 ' some great Knowledge in the Tongues and Arts or
 ' Sciences, and as if the Power of the Spirit were of
 ' no efficacy without these Helps. Whereby it co-
 ' meth to pass, that whilst they think they understand
 ' not even those things which in some sort they do
 ' understand, being expressed in most clear and
 ' evident words; they do at length arrive to that
 ' Blockishness that they cannot understand them in-
 ' deed; so that, though they have before their Eyes
 ' a Sentence of Scripture so clear, that nothing can
 ' be more evident; yet if they to whose Authority
 ' they in all things subject themselves, shall say any
 ' thing point-blank opposite thereunto, they will
 ' give credit unto them, and imagine themselves not
 ' to see that which they see as clear as the Light.
 ' And

And by these means verily it comes to pass, That
 when the Doctrine of Religion is corrupted, the
 Mutation is not discovered: Furthermore, when
 the Doctrine is once begun to be changed, it must
 needs be, that out of one Error another should
 spring and propagate infinitely; and God, for Just
 Reasons of his own, blinding them, men bring up-
 on themselves so great Darknes, and slip into such
 foul Errors; That if God out of Mercy open a
 mans Eyes, and let him see those Errors he lives in,
 he can scarcely believe himself, or be perswaded
 that he was ever enveloped with such blind Errors.
 Which thing is as true, and as well to be seen in
 Men of greatest Learning & Experience. If thou shalt
 thorowly peruse the writings of some of the School-
 men (as they call them) thou shalt in some places
 meet with so much Accuteaess, as will make thee
 admire. Thou shalt see them oftentimes cleave a
 fine Thred into many parts, and accurately Anoto-
 mise a Flea, and a little after fall so foully, and avouch
 such Absurdities, That thou canst not sufficiently
 stand amaz'd; wherefore we must obey that Advice
 of the Poet;

*Principijs obsta, sero medicina paratur,
 Cum mala per longas invaluere moras.*

Resist betimes, that Med'cine staves too long,
 Which comes when Age has made the Grief too
 (strong.

Now there is need of a double Caution: viz.
 That there be no Change made in the Doctrine,
 when

'when it is pure: And if any Change be made, that
 'there be notice taken of it. Now look what Change
 'is made in this kind, all the Blame is laid upon those
 'whose Office it is to instruct the People; for though
 'themselves are the Authors of the Change, yet
 'will the people impute it to the Ministers Sleepiness
 'and want of Care at least. It concerns therefore
 'the Pastors and Teachers to be Eagle-eyed, and to
 'be very well acquainted with those Causes where-
 'by the Change of Doctrine becomes undiscovered,
 'and to have them at their Fingers ends, and to be
 'wary, that on no hand they may miscarry. Now
 'it will be an excellent Caution for the keeping of
 'Doctrine pure, if they shall avoid all curious and
 'vain Controversies: If they shall set before their
 'Eyes the scope and end of all Religious Doctrine,
 'and likewise a Series or Catalogue of all such things
 'as make to the attainment of that End (of which
 'we formerly spake;) if they shall affect not only,
 'the matter it self, but also the words and phrases
 'which the Holy Ghost in Scripture makes use of,
 'and exceedingly suspect all different Forms of speak-
 'ing. Not that I would have them speak nothing
 'but *Hebraisms*, for so their Language would not be
 'plain nor intelligible: but I wish that they will shun
 'all such Expressions, as have been invented by over-
 'nice Disputants, beyond what was necessary to ex-
 'press the sence of the *Hebrew* and *Greek*, and all those
 'Tenets which men by their own Wits do collect and
 'infer from the Scriptures. Now of what Concern-
 'ment this will be, we may gather by this Instance:
 'The *Papists* think it one and the same thing to say,

The

'The Church cannot err, and to say in the words of
 'our Lord, *Wheresoever two or three shall be gathered*
 'together in my Name, there will I be in the midst
 'of them. Yet is the Difference very great,
 'which may thus appear; forasmuch as in case any
 'one shall conceive the Church to be the Pope, Car-
 'dinals, and Bishops anointed by the Pope: he hear-
 'ing the aforesaid Sentence, will judge, that whatso-
 'ever they shall decree, ought to be of Force. But
 'if he shall rather mind the words of our Lord, and
 'shall consider that those kind of men, do regard no-
 'thing but their own Commodity, Wealth and Do-
 'minion; he will be so far from so understanding
 'them, that peradventure not being able to allow
 'the Deeds and Practices of these Men, he will come
 'to hope from those words, That if himself with
 'some other good Men loving God with their whole
 'Heart, shall come together, and unanimously im-
 'plore the Assistance of God, shall be better able to
 'determine what it is that ought to be believed and
 'practised for the attainment of Salvation, then if
 'they should persist to put their Confidence in such
 'Pastors. Now this Rule, that the words of the
 'Scripture ought to be used rather than any other, is
 'then especially to be observed, when any thing is
 'delivered as a certain and tryed Truth, or as a Rule
 'of Faith or Life, or out of which any other thing
 'is to be inferred. For in Expositions and Explana-
 'tions, as there is need happily of greater Liberty,
 'so is there less Danger if it be taken. For, whenas
 'the Word of God, and the exposition thereof, are at

'one and the same time both together in view, as it
 'were; there no man can be ignorant, that the Expo-
 'sition is the word of Man, so that he may reject it, in
 'case it seem impertinent. And look by what means
 'a man may hinder the Doctrine of Religion from
 'being changed, by the self-same he may find whether
 'it be chang'd or no. Now every man ought to com-
 'pare the Doctrine of that Age wherein he lives, with
 'no other Doctrine then that which was out of que-
 'stion spotless, which is the Doctrine of the Apostles.
 'Wherefore, notwithstanding that in our Age the
 'Gospel is as it were revived, yet ought not any man
 'thus to think, That he ought to examin whether
 'the Gospel hath lost any of that Purity whereunto
 'it had at this time arrived; he ought rather to look
 'again and again, whether some Corruption do not
 'yet remain, whether it be not in some part, as yet
 'not sufficiently restored to its ancient Purity and
 'Lustre: and confidently perswade himself, That he
 'cannot be (that I may so speak) sufficiently super-
 'stitious, in rejecting every word which is not in the
 'Scriptures. Forasmuch as man will ever be more
 'Wise and Wary than the holy Spirit, and can very
 'hardly forbear to mingle somewhat from his own
 'head: so that whatever comes from man, can ne-
 'ver be sufficiently suspected. And because a thing
 'will be so much the better preserved, by how much
 'the greater is the number of those that keep it: the
 'people ought often to be put in mind, That both
 'the reading of the Scriptures, and the Care of Re-
 'ligion belongs not to the Pastors of the Church only; but
 'that

that every one that would be saved ought to make diligent search, whether any Corruption be already, or is for the future like to be introduced; and this to do no less carefully, then if he were perswaded that all beside himself were asleep: and whatsoever is wont to take the common people off from such studies, Care must be taken that that thing be wholly taken away. Concerning which matter, we shall more conveniently discourse anon.

Now, forasmuch as the profit will be small, if some private man shall observe that an Error is introduced, unless he discover the said Error, and lay it open: there must of necessity be some way how this may conveniently be done. Now there cannot be a more fitting way, then that which the Apostle pro- pounds to the *Corinthians*. *Let two or three Prophets speak, and let the rest judge; and if any thing be revealed to him that sits by, let the former be silent. For ye may all prophecy one by one, that all may learn, and all may be exhorted.* If some one person shall alwayes speak in the Church, and no man at any time may contradict him; it will be a very strange thing, if that one man be not puffed up, if he do not fall into such a Conceit of himself, as to think that he is the only man, that he only hath understanding, he alone is wise: that all the rest are a company of brute Animals as it were, who ought to depend only upon him, and to do nothing but learn of him. And if any man shall think, that himself likewise hath some ability to teach, he will account that man an hainous offender. But what

' says the Apostle to this? Did the Word of God come
 ' from you? or came it unto you only? If any seem to be a
 ' Prophet, or Spiritual; let him acknowledge what I write
 ' unto you to be the commands of the Lord. But if any one
 ' be ignorant, let him be ignorant. Wherefore Brethren;
 ' labour that ye may Prophecie, and forbid not to speak with
 ' Tongues, let all things be done decently, and in order.
 ' It is exceedingly to be lamented, That this custom,
 ' and the practice of this command of the Lord, is
 ' not again restored into the Churches, and brought
 ' into use. But some men may say; Such is the rash-
 ' ness of this Age of ours, such the boldness, such
 ' the impudence, That if it were allowed to every
 ' one to speak in the Congregation, there will be no
 ' end of Brawls and Contention. Why so? Is a
 ' man another kind of Creature now, then what he
 ' was of Old? Thou wilt say, he is. For mankind hath
 ' continually degenerated, grown worse and worse,
 ' and seems now to have attained the top of Corrup-
 ' tion. Is it so indeed? But, suppose it to be so; Thou
 ' that art the Teacher of the people, art not thou also
 ' thy self made of the same Mold? Art not thou born
 ' in the same Age? Inasmuch as this ordinance princi-
 ' pally was intended to keep Pastors within the
 ' bounds of modesty: that they may understand, That
 ' they are not the authors of the Word of God, that
 ' they have not alone received the Spirit: by how
 ' much the more mankind hath degenerated, by so
 ' much the greater need is there thereof; for that there
 ' is now more rashness, Arrogance, Pride, then of
 ' Old; this is true, as well of the Pastors and Tea-
 ' chers

chers, as of the rest of the people, Art thou a Pro-
 phet, hast thou any portion of the Spirit? If thou
 hast not, so unfitting it is, that thou alone shouldst
 speak in the Congregation, that there will hardly be
 found any that desires rather to be silenc't, then thy
 self. But if thou art a Prophet, if thou hast the Spi-
 rit, mark what the Apostle sayes, *Acknowledge* (quoth
 he) *that those things which I write, are the Command-*
ments of the Lord. Go to then, On the one side we
 have the judgment of our Lord, willing that Pro-
 phesy (for this is a Word that we are obliged to
 use) should be common to all, and that not for the
 Destruction, but the Salvation of the Church. On
 the other side, we have thy Judgment who fearest
 lest that may breed Contentions and Confusion;
 whose Judgment now ought we rather stand to?
 If thou shalt conceive we must stand to thine: con-
 sider what thou assumest unto thy self, and what
 will become of thy modesty. Our Lord, it should
 seem, understood not what a kind of Creature man
 was; he wanted thy wisdom belike. to admonish
 him of the danger; or haply he thought not upon
 that Corruption which should befall mankind,
 whereby such a Liberty might prove unprofitable.
 But Paul answers thee, *That God is not the author of*
Contention, but of Peace: Who well knowing what
 might move Contentions, what beget Peace, and
 not loving nor willing to have Contention, but
 Peace, willed that this liberty of Prophecyng
 should be in the Church. What canst thou say to
 the contrary? what hast thou to object against God
 himself

'himself, wilt thou accuse him of indiscretion? No
 'man hath so wicked a Tongue, as to dare to do it.
 'Yet if thou shalt diligently search thine Heart, thou
 'shalt find there a certain disposition ready to contend
 'even with God himself: Which motion of thy
 'Heart must by no means be hearkned unto, but
 'sharply repressed, and wholly subjected to the Spi-
 'rit of God. It may seem peradventure an absurd
 'thing, That after some very learned person hath
 'spoken, some contemptible person shall be allowed
 'to contradict him. Can such a person so do, with-
 'out great rashness and temerity? Were I to speak
 'according to the judgment of man, verily I could
 'not deny it. But if we be really perswaded, That
 'the knowledge of matters Divine, ought not to be
 'attributed to our Watching, Studies, Wits, but to
 'God, and to his Spirit, wherewith he can in a mo-
 'ment endue the simplest person in the World, and
 'that with no more labour or difficulty, then if he
 'were to give him to one that had spent *Nestor's* Age
 'in Study: What reason is there for me to judge that
 'this man does rashly and unadvisedly, if he shall
 'arise and contradict? Is not the Spirit able to reveal
 'somewhat to him, which he hath hidden from thee?
 'Now, if the Spirit have revealed somewhat to him,
 'and to that end revealed it that he might contradict,
 'that by his means the thing may be revealed to the
 'Church: shall I say that he hath done rashly in obey-
 'ing the holy Ghost? And if thou think otherwise, ve-
 'rily thou art not perswaded that the Spirit is the
 'Author and Teacher of this Knowledge, but that
 'all

all the praise thereof is due to Studies, Watchings,
and the Wits of men. And if this be thy judgment,
I tell thee again, That thou art not only unworthy
to be the sole Speaker, but worthy rather to be the
only person not permitted to speak in the Congre-
gation.

And that thou mayst the better understand,
that the most Unlearned ought to be allowed
to speak, consider, God will have himself to be
acknowledged the Author of his own gifts: he will
not have his praise attributed unto our Studies or
Wits, but unto himself. But if the man that hath
spent all his Life in Study, speak wisely, it is not
attributed to God, but to study: In word, perhaps
it may be attributed to God, yet not without a ve-
hement Reluctancy of our Judgment: and this is
that which (I say) God will not abide. But if so
be thou shalt hear a wise word come out of the
Mouth of some unlearned Person, thou must needs,
whether thou wilt or no, acknowledge God to be
the Author thereof. So, when God was minded
to give unto *Israel* a Victory against the *Midianites*,
under the Conduct of *Gideon*; and *Gideon* had ga-
thered together Thirty Thousand Men, lest the
Israelites should boast that they had gotten the Vi-
ctory by their own Strength, and not by the As-
sistance of God, (which might have been concei-
ved, if *Gideon* had fought with so numerous an
Army) he would not suffer him to have above
Three hundred, that it might appear that he was
the

' the Cause of the Victory, and not the Number or
 ' Valour of those that fought. Now, besides the
 ' Glory of God, hereby great Profit does accrue to
 ' the Church. For if the People shall see now one
 ' man, now another, endued with the Spirit, be-
 ' yond all Expectation; many will thereby be en-
 ' couraged to hope for the same Gift, if they shall ask
 ' it; many will learn and profit; and it will there-
 ' by come to pass, that when Occasion shall be to
 ' choose a Minister, the Church shall not need to
 ' call strange and unknown Persons to that Office,
 ' but she may have of her own such as are fit to be
 ' chosen, Men whose Conversation and Manners are
 ' sufficiently known. And when the number of such
 ' as are able to prophesie, shall be great, the Church
 ' will not be forced to use such Pastors as from their
 ' very Childhood have proposed to themselves such
 ' Offices as the reward of their Studies; and addi-
 ' ed themselves to the study of Scripture and Reli-
 ' gion, no otherwise then they would have done to
 ' some Trade, whereby they meant in time to get
 ' their Living: So that a Man can expect but very
 ' few of them to prove other then Mercenary or
 ' Hireling Pastors.

Now, that it was the Custom of the Jewish
 Luke 4. ' Church, that all might thus Prophesie; we
 ' may hence conjecture, in that it is upon
 ' Record, Luke 4. how our Lord, upon the Sabbath day
 ' according to the Custom, came into the Synagogue, took
 ' a Book and expounded a place of Esay; and how,
 ' being

'being twelve years of Age he sate at Jerusalem in the
 'Temple among the Doctors, and did dispute. For he
 'could not so do by vertue of any ordinary office, for-
 'asmuch as his Age was uncapable, neither did the
 'Doctors know who he was. Yea rather, our Lord
 'in so doing must needs make use of the power which
 'was granted to every one to speak. It remained in
 'the Christians Congregations until the times of Con-
 'stantine at the least. Forasmuch as we have these
 'words of Eusebius, the Writer of Church Eccle. Hist.
 'affairs, to that effect: *If any man inspired by* lib. 9.
 '*the Grace of God, should speak unto the People,*
 '*they all with great silence fixing their Eyes upon him gave*
 '*such attention, as if he had brought them some Errand from*
 '*Heaven.* So great was the reverence of the hearers,
 'such order was seen among the Ministers. One af-
 'ter another, another after him. Neither was there
 'only two or three that Prophesied, according to
 'what the Apostle said, but to all was given to speak;
 'so that the wish of Moses seems rather to have been
 'fulfilled in them, when he said, *Would God all the*
 '*People might Prophesie.* There was no Spleen, no
 'Envy, the gifts of God were dispensed, every one,
 'according to his ability, contributing his assistance
 'for the confirmation of the Church: And all was
 'done with love, in such sort, That they strove mu-
 'rually to honour each other, and every one to pre-
 'fer another before himself. But to the end this com-
 'mon prophecying may be profitable to the Church,
 'we must diligently mark what the Apostle advises,
 'For a sure thing it is, that the Pride of Man is so
 'great, that whatever hath once fallen from him, he
 'will

' will by any means have it stand for a Truth, neither
 ' can he suffer that any man should infringe the same.
 ' So that if he might be permitted to judge, that last
 ' spake, it will be a Miracle, if a man in his Life time
 ' should see any one give way to him that contradicts
 ' him: What is *Paul's* advice therefore in this case?
 ' *Let two or three Prophets speak, and let the rest judge.*
 ' He will not therefore have the same Persons to be
 ' Parties and Judges. And he adds a little after, *And*
 ' *the Spirit of the Prophets, is subject to the Prophets, for*
 ' *God is not the Author of dissension, but of Peace.* So
 ' that as soon as any man hath spoken his own mind,
 ' he ought to rest himself satisfied with the judgment
 ' of the rest, and not obstinately to make no End of
 ' contending: if this be not done, a sure thing it is,
 ' there will be no end of strife. But what if any man
 ' will not be content to submit to the Judgment of the
 ' rest: Verily I would avouch, that being sharply
 ' admonished, that he disturb not the Congregation,
 ' and that he go not against the command of the Apo-
 ' stle, or rather of our Lord, commanding the Spi-
 ' rits of the Prophets to be subject to the Prophets;
 ' he ought to be cast out of the Society, though he
 ' should hold the prime place in the Congregation.
 ' The people likewise must frequently be admonish-
 ' ed, that liberty for any one to speak in the Congre-
 ' gation, is not therefore granted by the Apostle, to
 ' the end every one should speak what comes to his
 ' Tongues end, as if he were in a Market; but where-
 ' as he gives liberty to him to speak to whom any
 ' thing is revealed, he would have all Rashness and
 ' Impudence to be laid aside: He that reverences not the
 ' Church

Church of God, let that man know, he despiseth
 the Spirit of God, who is President there; and
 shall be sure not to escape unpunished. Before a
 man propounds any thing to the Church, he ought
 to consider again and again, how sure a manifestation
 on he hath of that thing, and whatever the matter
 be, let him be sure not to forget a sober, modest,
 bashful behaviour, without which vertues, doubt-
 less no good can be effected. But here we must at-
 tentively consider, both how far a man ought to sub-
 mit to the judgment of the Congregation, and who
 may deservedly be accounted a Troubler of the
 Church. Verily, I conceive a man ought so far to
 give way, as that after I have alledged what I had
 to say for my Opinion, if yet the rest shall not allow
 of my Judgment, I ought to give over defending of
 it, and cease to be troublesome to the Congregation
 concerning the same: But I ought not to be com-
 pelled to confess that I have erred, or to deprecate
 any fault, whiles I do not yet understand that I have
 erred, for so I should sin against God. He there-
 fore is a Troubler of the Church, that will not, so
 far as we have expressed, submit to the judgment of
 the Church; but goeth on to be troublesome; but
 especially that man who would exact of another that
 which he ought not to do; viz. to recant, being
 not perswaded that he is in an Error. But those
 men are commonly reputed troublers of the Church
 who refuse to ratifie whatever shall any ways fall
 out of the Pastors Mouthes. Again, in this place it
 may reasonably be demanded, whether, when that
 a matter hath been once or twice debated, and some

'man knowing the judgment of the Congregation,
 'would again reduce it into Controversie, he ought
 'to be heard, or enjoyned silence, and take the mat-
 'ter for determin'd. But of this we shall in another
 'place more conveniently dispute. That which re-
 'mains therefore, is, that we wrestle with God, by
 'daily Prayers, to grant that we may have the use of
 'this so sovereign and saving liberty, so profitable to
 'the Church, and that thereby we may reap abun-
 'dance of Fruit. And that he would, to that end,
 'tame and break our Spirits with his Spirit, and ren-
 'der them milde and gentle: and not suffer what he
 'hath ordain'd for the confirmation and establishment
 'of his Church, to be by the stubbornness and per-
 'verseness of our Wits and Minds, turned to the mis-
 'chief and destruction thereof. With much more to
 the same purpose, too large to be here inserted.

What I have cited, makes an Apology for doing so,
 needless, his whole Book is a most accurate account of
Satans Stratagems, to cause & keep up divisions among
Christians, deserving a first place with the most Chri-
 stian Writers since the Apostolical times. He was
 an *Italian*, of excellent Natural and Supernatural
 endowments, Banisht about *Luther's* times for the
 Gospel.

Let us now inform our selves of the Judgment of
 that great Man *J. Hales* upon the
 matter in hand, viz. 'To your se-
 'cond Query, *Whether the Keys were*
 'confined to the Apostles only? The
 'Answer is in no case hard to give, it may perchance
 'in some case be dangerous; for there is a Generation
 'of

J. Hales, Of the
Keys, pag. 170,
 171, 172, 173.

*of men in the World (the CLERGY they call them) who
 'impropriate the Keyes unto themselves, and would be ve-
 'ry angry to understand, that others from themselves
 'should claim a right unto them. To your Question
 'then, no doubt but originally none received the
 'Keyes from the Mouth of our Saviour, but the Apo-
 'stles only; none did nor ever could manage them
 'with that Authority and Splendor, as the Apostles
 'did, who were above all most amply furnished
 'with all things fitting so great a Work. For where-
 'as you seem to intimate, that the preaching Mission
 'was communicated to others, as the seventy two
 'Disciples, as well as the Apostles; you do but mi-
 'stake your self, if you conceive that the Keyes of the
 'Gospel were any way committed to them; for con-
 'cerning the Mysteries of Jesus Christ, and him cru-
 'cified for the Sins of the World (wherin indeed
 'the opening of the Kingdom of Heaven did consist)
 'they received it not, they knew it not. To be the
 'prime Reporters of this, was an honour imparted
 'only to the Apostles: Yet were they not so impar-
 'ted, as that they should be confin'd to them. Every one
 'that heard and received the *Light* of the saving Do-
 'ctrine from them, so far forth as he had understand-
 'ing in the wayes of *Life*, had now the *Keys of the King-
 'dom of Heaven* committed to his Power, both for his own
 'and others use. Every one, of what State or Condition so-
 'ever, that hath any occasion offered him, to serve ano-
 'ther in the wayes of *Life*, CLERGY, or LAY,
 'MALE or FEMALE, whatever he be, hath these *Keyes*
 'not only for himself, but for the benefit of others. For
 'if Natural goodness teach every man, *Lumen de Lu-
 'mine,**

mine, *Erranti comiter monstrare viam, &c.* Then how much more doth Christian Goodness require of every one, to his ability, to be a Light to those who sit in Darknes, and direct their steps, who most dangerously mistake their way? *To save a Soul, every man is a Priest.* To whom I pray you, is that said in *Leviticus*, *Thou shalt not see thy Brother Sin, but thou shalt reprove, and save thy Brother?* And if the Law binds a Man, when he saw his Enemies Cattel to stray, to put them in their way; How much more doth it oblige him to do the like for the Man himself? See you not how the whole World conspires with me in the same Opinion? Doth not every Father teach his Son, every Master his Servant, every Man his Friend? How many of the Laity in this Age, and from time to time in all Ages, have by writing for the publick good, propagated the Gospel of Christ, as if some *secret instinct* of Nature had put into mens minds thus to do, &c.

To this let me add his Sense of the force of the *Fathers* Authority in the decision of Controversies, and how far the Antients, whether Fathers or Councils ought to be interested in the debates of these times, which may not be improper to the present subject, because not a few build upon their bottom.

You shall find (says he) that all *Schisms* have crept into the Church by one of these three ways; either upon matter of *Fact*, or matter of *Opinion*, or point of *Ambition*. For the first; I call that matter of *Fact*, when something is required to be done by us, which either we know, or strongly

J Hales, Tract
of Schism, p. 201,
202, 203, 204.

'strongly suspect to be unlawful; so the first notable
 'Schism, of which we read in the Church contained
 'in it matter of Fact; For it being, upon Error taken
 'for necessary, that an *Easter* must be kept; and upon
 'worse then Error, if I may so speak, (for it was no
 'less than a point of *Judaism* forced upon the Church)
 'upon worle than Error, I say, thought further ne-
 'cessary, that the ground for the time of our keeping
 'that Feast, must be the Rule left by *Moses* to the
 'Jews; there arose a *stout* Question, whether we
 'were to Celebrate with the *Jews*, on the fourteenth
 'Moon, or the *Sunday* following? This matter, though
 'most unnecessary, most vain, yet caused as great a
 'Combustion. as ever was in the Church; The West
 'separating and refusing Communion with the East,
 'for many Years together. In this *Fantastical* Hurry,
 'I cannot see, but all the World were Schismatics:
 'neither can any thing excuse them from that Impu-
 'tation; excepting only this, that we charitably sup-
 'pose that all Parties out of Conscience did what they
 'did.

'A thing which befell them through the *Ignorance*
 'of their *Guides*, (for I will not say their malice) and
 'that through the just Judgment of God, because
 'through sloath and BLIND OBEDIENCE Men ex-
 'amined not the things, which they were taught, but
 'like Beasts of Burthen patiently couched down, and
 'indifferently underwent whatsoever their Superiors laid
 'upon them. By the way, by this you may plainly
 'see the danger of our appeal unto Antiquity, for re-
 'solution in Controverted points of Faith, and how
 'small Relief we are to expect from thence. For if
 'the

' the discretion of the *chiefeft Guides and Directors of*
 ' *the Church*, did in a Point so *trivial*, so *inconsiderable*,
 ' so *mainly fail them*, as not to see the Truth is a Sub-
 ' ject, wherein it is the *greatest Marvel* how they could
 ' *avoid the sight of it*; can we without imputation of
 ' *extream grossness and folly*, think so POOR SPIRI-
 ' *TED persons competent Judges of the Questions now*
 ' *on Foot betwixt the Churches?* Pardon me, I know
 ' not what Temptation drew that Note from me.

How these men will come off I can't tell; they
 have ventured fairly, and yet I think their case not
 hazard us at all; you have them in three points plain.
First, That relying upon the Clergy as Guardians of
 Truth to the People, and the Peoples not examining
 the truth of things from them, is not Apostolical, but
 Apostatical. *Secondly*, That no Councils or Fathers
 ought to be the Rule or Judge of our Faith. *Thirdly*,
 That to save Souls every Man is a Priest; that is, the
 people are interrested in the Christian Ministry, which
 is not tyed to Times, Places, Persons and Orders, as
 under the Law; but free to all that have obtained
 Mercy and Grace from God; and therefore *Peter* calls
 the believers a Royal Priesthood. So that every one is
 Priest to himself under the Gospel. But all this I have
 mentioned with design, if it be possible, to beat men
 off that superstitious and dangerous Veneration they
 carry to the Names of *Church*, *Priesthood* and *Fathers*;
 as if they were to be saved by them, and not by *Christ*,
 who is only *Head* and *Saviour* of the true Church.
 And truly, when I consider the *wilde dependance* some
 people have upon the *Church*, whilst they know not
 what she is, and make it a Principle not to Inquire, I am
 amaz'd

amazed with what Confidence they expose their Souls. This Principle it is, and not *Inquiry*, that makes men careless and unactive about their own Salvation. But let none deceive themselves, *as they sow they must Reap*. 'Tis not to be saved, to be within the Pale of any visible Church in the World. That is putting an eternal Cheat upon our selves. *All things are all things*, within or without the pale; that matters not; and as *Sin* can't be *Christened*, nor *Impiety* reconciled to *Christianity* by no Arts of men, *so the Wages will be Death*, eternal Death. To be therefore of the Church, of which Christ is Head, the *redeemed, regenerated Church of Christ*, is quite another thing, then to be of any visible Society whatever; for in all such Communions there are but too many that have no true Title to Christianity. If then that Immaculate Church of which Christ is head, be made up only of holy and regenerated Souls throughout the Societies of *Christians*; this will administer but little Comfort to those that presume upon their being within the Pale of the Visible Church.

But to proceed to those Scriptures that oppose themselves to humane Authority in matters of Faith, &c.

There is one place of Scripture, that is irreconcilable to *Implicit Faith* and *Blind Obedience*;

1 John
1: 10.

He that believeth, hath the Witness in HIMSELF: This general Rule respects no Persons, 'tis the Result of the *Holy Ghost* to all Believers. Such have no need to go to *Rome*, nor *Winefried's Well*, to the *Shrines of Saints*, the *Priests* nor the *Church*, for a Proof of their Faith; they have an

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Evidence

Evidence nearer home: they have the *witness* of their *Faith* and the *Reason* of their *Hope* IN THEMSELVES.

'Tis true, this is a Private Judge; but (as it happens) 'tis one of the *Holy Ghost's* setting up, of all things I confess most destructive to *Papacy* no doubt; for here is a *Judge* in every man, that sincerely believes, to whom he must stand and fall in this and the other World. For (saith the same Apostle) *If our Heart condemn us, God is greater than our Heart, and knoweth all things: Beloved, if our Heart condemn us not, then have we Confidence towards God; The Witness in our selves* discharges us. *The Spirit beareth Witness with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God and Sons of the true Church; not she, that hath fasted her self with the Flesh of Saints, and died her Garments in the Blood of Martyrs; who hath Merchandized in the Souls of men: but of that Church who is Crowned with Stars, and Cloathed with the Sun, and has the Moon under her Feet: a Church of Light and Knowledge, of Understanding and Truth, and not of Implicite Faith and Blind Obedience: one that tramples upon all Sublunary Glory; and not she that makes her Pretences to Religion a Decoy to catch the World.*

Of like Tendency is that notable Passage of the Apostle Paul to the *Corinthians*: *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the Faith; prove your own selves: Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be Reprobates?* Here is not a Word of the Pope nor an External Judge;

Judge, no humane Inquisition or Authority. *Examine your selves, whether ye be in the Faith? prove your own selves: but which way shall we do this? by Christ, who is the great Light that shines in our Hearts to give us the Knowledge of God and our selves: He that believes in him, has the Witness in himself, he is no Reprobate; his Heart condemns him not.*

To which I will add another Passage to the same Purpose (in his Epistle to the Galatians) *But let every Man prove his own work, then shall he have* Gal. 6. *Rejoycing in himself alone, and not in another:* 4, 5.

FOR EVERY MAN SHALL BEAR HIS OWN BUR-

DEN. Here every man is enjoyned to turn *Inquisitor* upon himself; and the Reason rendred shews the Justice of the thing; because my *Rejoycing* must be in *my self alone, and not in another: I stand and Fall* to no man: such as I sow, I must reap at the Hand of God, if *Paul* say true. Mens Pardons are Vain, and their Indulgences Fictions; *For every man shall bear his own Burden in that great Day of the Lord.* It cannot therefore be Reasonable that another man should have the Keeping of my Understanding at my Eternal Cost and Charges, or that I must entirely depend upon the Judgment of a Man or Men, who erring, (and thereby causing me to err) cannot be damned for me, but I must pay their Reckoning at the hazard of my own Damnation.

I am not unacquainted with the great Objection that is made by *Roman Catholicks* and some *Protestants* too, *High Church-men* perhaps, that *Love the Treason,*

but hate the Traytor; that love this part of Popery, but hate the Pope, viz. There are doubts in Scripture, even about the most important Points of Faith; some body must guide the Weak, there must be some one ultimate, External and Visible Judge to appeal to, who must Determine and Conclude all Persons as to their Doubts and Apprehensions concerning the Interpretation of Scripture, otherwise So many Men, so many Minds; the Church would be filled with Controversie and Confusion.

I answer, That the Scriptures are made more doubtful than they are by such as would fain preserve to themselves the Umpirage & Judgship of their Meaning. I deny it in point of Fact, that Man's Duty is not most plainly exprest in all that concerns Eternal Salvation; but 'tis very strange, that when God intends nothing more by the Scriptures, than to reach the Capacities of Men as to things on which their Eternal Salvation depends; yet that no Book, if such men say true, should be so obscure, nor subject to so many Various, nay Contradictory Constructions. Name me one Author, *Heathen, Jew or Christian*, that ever wrote with that Obscurity and seeming Inconsistency, which some gladly pretend to find in the holy Scripture, that they might have the Use and Keeping of them from the *Vulgar*, and make their own Ends by it. Is then every Body's Book to be understood but God's? Was that writ *not to be understood*? In short, one of these two things must be true. Either that God intended *Not to be understood*; or *To be understood*, in what he commanded to be written. If he resolved *Not to be understood*, it had been

been better there had been nothing writ, but if it was his purpose *To be understood* of Men, it must be supposed, that what he caused to be written, was plain enough for men to understand, or he mist his own Aim and End, and writ it to no purpose, which is absurd.

If it should be told me, *That it is not denied, but that the Scriptures may be understood by some body, but not by every body; for that the Great, Visible Judge must needs understand them, because it belongs to his Office, to resolve those Doubts, and determine those Controverses that may arise about understanding them.*

Ans. I must also say, that this is false in *Fact*. For its ridiculous to imagine, that *Luke* did not make *Theophilus* his own Judge in the reading of what he writ to him, or that the Apostles in writing to the several Churches, as *Rome, Corinth, Ephesus, &c.* to whom they directed their Epistles, did not intend that they should understand what they writ, or that they erected any such Officer in the Church, as an *Expounder* of their Epistles to the Assembly to be necessarily believed. For we know in those days *The People made the Church*, they were the *κλήρος*, the *CLERGY*, however it came about that it be now *engrossed* into fewer hands; as you may see in the *Greek of Peter*: *Μηδ' ὡς κληρονομία τοῦ κλήρου;* 1 Pet. 5. 3. which *κληρος* is translated *Heritage* in all our Bibles. But this is as if the Priest's only were the Lord's Heritage, which can't be, for a Reason obvious to all, namely, that they reign as Lords over Gods.

God's Heritage or Clergy (forbid expressly by *Peter*) therefore not the Heritage and Clergy over which they so rule like Lords: by no means. I will say no more but this, 'tis no convincing Proof to me of their Humility. But to shut up this Argument about the Difficulty of Understanding the Scripture and pretended a necessity of a Visible Judge, I say, *Whatsoever may be spoken, may be written; or thus, Whatsoever a Visible Judge can now say, the holy Pen men by God's Direction might have written;* and what an Omniscient and Omnipotent God did know and could do for Man's Salvation, an OMNIBENEVOLENT God, that tells us, *he delights not in the Death of one Soul, but rather that he should be saved,* would have done. And because God is as Omnibenevolent as Omniscient and Omnipotent, we must conclude he has done it; and 'tis great Presumption and a mean Shelter to Ignorance to raise a credit to Humane Devices, by beating down the true Value of the Scriptures.

They are dark; what follows? *they must not be read?* what follows then? *why then such Teachers may do as they list with the People.* But did the Pharisees with their broad Philacteries know God's mind better then the Prophets? or could they deliver it clearer? no such matter; 'tis by the same strange Figure that the School-men know the mind of Christ better then the Apostles, and that the Council of TRENT can declare Faith more clearly then the holy Ghost in the Scripture hath done; and yet this is the English of their Doctrine that hold to us those Lights to read Scripture by, and that would have us teach their Canons

nons and Decrees, to find out the Mind of the holy Ghost in Scripture.

The Confusions that are pretended to follow such an Inquiry are but the wretched Arts of ill men, as much as in them lies, to keep Light and Truth out of the World: When the Net was cast into the Sea, there came some good some bad Fish, that was not the Fishers fault they were no better. Inquiry is not to be blam'd for the ill use weak or worse men make of it: The *Bereans* might not all believe, though they might all search; for men don't inquire with equal Wisdom, Love and good Desire, some seek and find not: Some ask and receive not; there- James 4. 3.
fore must none ask or seek after that which is good? or because some ask or seek amiss, will it follow that the thing it self is naught? If Superstition, Error, Idolatry and Spiritual Tyranny be detected, and Truth discover'd, will it more then make amends for all that Weakness and Folly some men have brought forth by the liberty of such an Inquiry? The Enemies of Light may be as Rhetorical as they please upon the excess or Presumption of some, bolder then wise, and more Zealous then Knowing; but if they had nothing to lose by the discovery, they would never be the Enemies of a prudent Search. It is to be fear'd such get that Obedience by a blind devotion; which no man could yield them upon better Information; and is it reasonable that men of that Stamp should secure their Empire by the Ignorance of the People? Ignorance ought to be the Mother of Devotion with none but those that cannot be devout upon better terms; it is the glory of a man that he is Religious upon

upon Reason, and that his Duty and Sacrifice are not blind or forc'd, but free and reasonable; Truth upon Knowledge though vext with Schism, wise and good men will chuse before Ignorant Religion with Uniformity. Enough of this.

But this Notion of an *Infallible Visible Judge* is as false in Reason as in Fact. For first, it takes away the Use of every Man's Reason, and it is a Contradiction to have any, unless he were *such an Interpreter and such a Judge, as would conclude us by Conviction*, and not by Authority: that would be the most-Well-come person in the World. But to over-rule my own Sight, to give the Lye to my own Understanding, say *Black is White*, and that *Two and Three make Ten*. thus, *Subjugare intellectum in Obsequium fidei*, to yield my Understanding to such an In-evident Way of Faith, nay, which is worse, to believe a Lye: for so it is to them, to whom the thing to be believed appears Untrue, is most-Unreasonable.

If we must be *Led*, it had been easier and better for us to have been born Blind, we might have follow'd then the Dog and the Bell, for we could not mend our selves; *but to see, and to be Led*, and that in ways we see to be foul or wrong, this is Anxious. Here lies the Dispute: and truly here the Question might fairly end. *Either put out our Eyes, or let us use them*: but if we have Eyes for our Minds, as well as for our Bodies, I see no Reason, why we should trust any man or men against the Eyes of our Understanding, any more than we ought to confide in them against the Sense and Certainty of the Eyes of our Bodies.

Where is the poorest *Mechanick* that would be paid

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his Labour in *Brass half Crowns* for Silver by either *Pope* or *Bishop*? and can we be so brutish, as to think our *Nobler part* void of Distinction about that Treasure which is of eternal Moment? For though *Peter* was to feed the Sheep, yet the Sheep were not to follow *Peter* but *Christ*: *My Sheep hear my Voice and follow me, and a Stranger they will not follow*: Here is no *Mediator* betwixt *Christ* John 10. 4, and his Sheep; nor does any body else hear 5, 27. his Voice for them: but they hear his Voice themselves. And though the *Shepherd* may have many Servants, yet he only is their *Shepherd*, and they are only the *Sheep* of his Fold.

But there are three places of Scripture, that come fresh into my Remembrance, that are very pertinent to the present Occasion. The first is this: *That which may be known of God, is Manifest in Men*, Rom. i. 19. *for God hath shewed it unto them*: That is, The Spirit of man being the *Candle* of the *Lord*, God hath enlightned it to manifest unto Man, what is necessary for him to know both of God and himself. Here is no need of *wax-Candles* or *Tapers*, or a Visible Guide and Judge: for *he that believes, has the Witness in himself*.

Another Passage is this: *Be ye Followers of me, even as I am also of Christ*. In which the *Apostle* is so far from setting himself up a Judge over the *Church of Corinth*, that he makes his appeal to them concerning his Doctrine and Conversation bounding both with that of his Lord *Jesus Christ*, and making them Judges of the Truth of his *Conformity* to that Example. *Be ye Followers of me*: How? after

what manner? What! Absolutely, without Examination? must we believe thee without any Tryal, and take what thou sayest for granted without any more to do? no such thing. *Be ye Followers of me, even as I also am of CHRIST*: I submit my self to be judg'd by you according to that Rule, and all Men and Churches are to be thus measur'd, that by Claim to the Name of *Christian*.

The Third Passage is in his *Second Epistle* to the same Church of *Corinth*, 'tis this: *Therefore seeing we have this Ministry as we have received Mercy,* 2 Cor. 4. *we faint not: but have renounced the hidden things of Dishonesty, not walking in Craftinesses, nor handling the Word of God deceitfully; but by manifestation of the Truth, commending our selves to every man's Conscience in the sight of God.* Here is the Utmost *Imposition* the Apostle makes use of: he requires not Men to receive him without Evidence, and refers himself to *that* of their own Consciences in the *Sight* of God. This was the Way of making Christians then, and this is the Way of making and keeping Christians now.

Conscience (in the best Sense) has ever been allow'd to be a *Bond* upon Men in all Religions; But that Religion, which under Pretence of Authority would superceed *Conscience*, and instead of making Men better (the End of Religion) makes them worse, by confounding all Distinction betwixt Good and Evil, and resolving all into an *Implicite Faith* and blind Obedience unto the Commands of a *Visible Guide* and Judge, is false, it cannot be otherwise. For to admire what Men don't know, and to make it a Principle not to inquire

inquire is the *last mark of Folly* in the Believer, and of *Imposture* in the Imposer. To be short, a *Christian* implies a Man, and a Man implies *Conscience* and *Understanding*; but he that has no *Conscience* nor *Understanding* (as he has not, that has delivered them up to the Will of another Man) is no *Man*, and therefore no *Christian*.

I do beseech you *Protestants* of all Sorts, to consider of the danger of this Principle with respect to *Religion*. *Of old time the Fool that said in his Heart there is no God*; But now upon this Principle Men must be made *Fools* in order to *believe*: Shall *Folly*, which is the *Shame* (if not the *Curse*) of a Man, be the Perfection of a *Christian*? Christ indeed has advised us to become *Little Children*, but never to become such *Fools*; for (as the Proverb is) this is *to be led by the Nose*, and not by our Wits. You know that God hates the *Sacrifice of Fools*: *I will pray with the Spirit and with Understanding*, saith the Apostle. Let us commend that Testimony, which we believe to be true, to the *Consciences* of Men, and let them have the Gospel privilege of *Examination*: *Error* only looses upon Trial. For if this had been the Way to *Christianity*, (with Reverence be it spoken) God had not made our Condition better, but worse: For this translates our Faith and Dependence upon God, to Man, and the Possibility, if not Probability of Man's erring exposed us to greater insecurity than before. For *where I never trusted, I never could be deceived*. But if I must abandon my own Sense and Judgment, and yield my self up to the Faith and Authority of another (to say no more of the *Blindness* and *Laziness* of such Belief

and Devotion) *what Security can I have, that the Man or Men, whom I trust may not err and deceive me? and that Deceit is irreparable.*

Again, since Mankind is a reasonable Creature, and that the more reasonable he is in his Religion, the nearer to his own being he comes, and to the Wisdom and Truth of his Creator, that did so make him, a Religion without Reason, Imposed by an unaccountable Authority against Reason, Sense and Conviction cannot be the Religion of the God of Truth and Reason; for it is not to be thought that he requires any thing that carries any violence upon the Nature of his Creature, or that gives the Lye to that Reason or Sense, which he first endow'd him with.

In short; Either Convince my understanding by the Light of Truth and Power of Reason, or bear down my Infidelity with the force of Miracles: for not to give me Understanding or Faith, and to press a submission that requires both, is most unreasonable.

But if there were no other Argument then this, it goes a great way with me, that as to such as have their understanding at liberty, if they are mistaken, there may be hopes of reclaiming by Informing them: but where *the Understanding and Conscience* are enslav'd to Authority, and where Men make it a Principal Doctrine to suspect their own Sense and strive against their own Convictions, (to move only by other mens Breath and fall down to their Conclusions) *nothing seems to be left for the soundest Arguments & clearest Truths to work upon.* They had almost need to be re Created in order to be converted, for who can reasonably endeavour to make him a Christian that is

not a Man, which he cannot be truly said to be, who has no understanding, or resolves not to use it, but reject it, which is yet worse, for he that has no understanding has no prejudice against it, but he that purposely denys & abuses it, is so much worse, as that he turns Enemy to him that has and uses his understanding. He therefore can never be convinced of his Error, who is prejudiced against the necessary means of Conviction, which is the use of his Understanding, without which 'tis impossible he should ever be Convinced.

To Conclude, I have reserved till last one Argument, which is *ad hominem* unanswerable by us Protestants, and without yielding to which we cannot be consistent with our selves, or be thought to do unto others, what we would have others do unto us, and that is this: *The Translation of the Scripture* was the painful work of our worthy Ancestors. This I call their most solemn Appeal to the People against the Pope and Traditions of Rome in the business of their Separation. For when the question rose of the divine Authority of this or the other Practice in the Doctrine or Worship of the *Roman Church*, presently they recur'd to the Scriptures, and therefore made them speak *English*, that they might witness for them to the people. This appeal to the People in defence of their Separation, by making them Judges of their proceeding against the Church according to the Testimony of the holy Scriptures, puts every man in possession of them. Search the Scriptures, say the first Protestants, Prove all things, see if what we say against Pope & Church of Rome be not true; and in case any difficulty did arise, they exhorted all to wait upon God, for the divine aid of his Spirit to illuminate

minate their understandings, that one should not impose upon the other, but commend them to God, be Brotherly, Patient, Long suffering, ready to help the Weak, inform the Ignorant, shew tenderness to the Mistaken, and with reason and moderation to gain the Obstinate. In short, Protestantism is a restoring to every man his just right of Inquiry and Choice; and to its honour be it ever spoken, there is greater likelihood of finding Truth, where all have Liberty to seek after it, then where it is denyed to all, but a few Grantees, and those too as short sighted as their Neighbours. But now let us Protestants examine, if we have not departed from this Sobriety, this Christian Temperance? how comes it, that we who have been forgiven much, have our selves fallen upon our fellow Servants, who yet owe us nothing? have not we refused them this reasonable choice? have we not threatened, beaten and imprisoned them? Pray Consider, have you not made Creeds, set Bounds to Faith, form'd and regulated a Worship, and strictly enjoyn'd all mens obedience by the help of the Civil Power upon pain of great Sufferings, which have not been spared to Dissenters, though in Common, Renouncers and Protestors with you against the Pope & Church of Rome; for this the Land mourns, Heaven is displeas'd, and all is out of due course.

To give us the Scriptures, and knock our Fingers for taking them! to Translate them that we may read them, and punish us for endeavouring to understand and use them as well as we can, both with respect to God, and our Neighbour; 'tis very unreasonable upon our Protestant Principles. I wish we could see the mischief

we draw upon our selves, & which is worse, our *causes* for the *Papist* in this case acts according to his Principle, but we against our Principle, which shews indeed, that we have the better Religion, but that we also are more condemnable. For if we will consider it seriously, we shall find it not much more injurious to Scripture, Truth and good Conscience that we believe as the Church believes, then that we believe as the Church says the Scripture would have us believe. For where is the difference, since I am not allowed to use my understanding about the Sense of Scripture any more then about the Faith of the Church: and if I must not receive any thing for Faith or Worship from Scripture, but what is handed to me by the Church, or her Clergy, I see my self in as ill terms, as if I had sat down with the old Doctrine of believing as the Church believes. And had the Controversie been only for the Word *Scripture*, without the use and application of it, (for at this rate that is all that is left us) truly the enterprise of our Fathers had been weak and unadvised; but because nothing less was intended by them, and that the Translation of the Scripture was both the *Appeal* and *Legacy* of these *Protestant* Ancestors, for the reasons before mentioned, I must conclude we are much degenerated from the simplicity of Primitive Protestantcy, and need to be admonish'd of our Backslidings, and I heartily pray to Almighty God. that he would quicken us by his present Mercies and Providences to return to our first Love.

*Let the Scripture be free. Sober Opinion tolerated, Good
Life cherish'd, Vice punish'd: away with Impetuous Nick-
Names,*

Names, Animosities, for the Lord's sake; and let *Holy writ* be our *Common Creed*, and *Pious Living* the *Test of Christianity*, that God may please to perfect the good work he has begun, and deliver us from all our Enemies.

I am now come to the last point, and that is PRO-PAGATION of FAITH by FORCE. In which I shall, with the *Ecclesiasticks*, consider the *Civil Magistrates* share herein; for though the Church-Men are principally guilty, that being profest Ministers of a Religion which renounces and condemns Force, they incite the Magistrate to use it both to impose their own Belief, and suppress that of other mens; yet the Civil Magistrate in running upon their Errands, and turning Executioner to their Cruelty upon such as dissent from them, involves himself in their Guilt.

That in this Protestant Country Laws have been made to prosecute men for their Difference and Dissent from the National Worship, and that those Laws have been executed, I presume will not be denied; for not only our own Histories since the Reformation will furnish us with Instances, but our own Age abounds with Proofs. *Thousands have been Excommunicated and Imprisoned, whole Families Undone, not a Bed left in the House, not a Cow in the Field, nor any Corn in the Barn: Widows and Orphants Uncommiserated, no regard had to Age or Sex: and what for? only because of their Meeting to Worship God after another (yet not a less Peaceable) Manner then according to the way of the Church of England.*

Nor

Nor have they only suffered this by Laws intended against them, but after an excessive rate by *Laws* known to have been never design'd against them, and *only intended against the Papists*; and in these Cases four times the Vallue has not served their turn; we can prove 60 l. taken for 13 l. and not one Penny returned, as we made appear before a *Committee* of the late Parliament, *which is the Penalty of four Offences for one*: to say nothing of the gross Abuses that have been committed against our Names and Persons by men of ill Fame and Life, that have taken the Advantage of our Tenderness, and the present Posture of the Law against us to have their Revengeful and Covetous Ends upon us. And though yet unredrest, nor a Session of Parliament has past these Seventeen Years, in which we have not humbly remonstrated our suffering condition: we have done our Part, which has been patiently to Suffer and modestly to Complain; 'tis yours now to hear our Groans, and if ever you expect Mercy from God, deliver us. The late Parliament just before its Dissolution was preparing some Relief for us; if that Parliament could think of it, yea, begin it, we hope you will finish and secure it.

To remove all Scruples or Objections, that *Politically* or *Ecclesiastically* on the part of the State or the Church, may be advanced against us in this request, I shall divide this Discourte into these two Parts. First, *Cesar's Authority*; next, the *Church's Authority about Force in things that relate to Faith and Conscience*, with my Reasons briefly to both.

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Our blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ did long since distingwishing the *Things of Cæsar from the Things of God*, in his plain and notable Answer unto that enflaming Question of the Jews, *about paying Tribute to Cæsar*. *Render* (saith he) *unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the Things that are God's*; that is, *Divine Worship*, and all things relating to it belong unto God, *Civil Obedience to Cæsar*. God can only be the Author of right Acts of Worship in the Mind: this is granted by all: therefore it is not in the Power of any Man or Men in the World, to sway or compel the Mind in Matters of Worship to God. Where this is attempted, God's Prerogative is invaded, and Cæsar (by which Word I understand the *Civil Government*) hath *All*. For he doth not only take his own Things, but the things appertaining to God also. Since if God hath not Conscience he hath nothing. *My Kingdom*, says Christ, *is not of this World*, nor is the Magistrate's of the other World; Therefore he exceeds his Province and Commission when ever he meddles with the Rites of it. Let Christ have his Kingdom, he is sufficient for it, and let Cæsar have his, *'tis his Due*. *Give unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's*. Then there are things *that belong not to Cæsar*, and we are not to give those to him, such are Gods things, divine things; but those that belong to Cæsar and his Earthly Kingdom, must be of Duty rendered to him.

If any should ask me, *what are the Things properly belonging to Cæsar?* I answer in Scripture Language *To love Justice, do Judgment, relieve the Oppressed,*

right

right the Fatherless, be a Terror unto Evil-doers, and a Praise to them that do well; for this is the great End of Magistracy.

But perhaps my Answer shall be reckoned too general and ambiguous, and a fresh Question started, *who are the Evil-doers, to whom the Civil Authority ought to be terrible?* But this ought in my Judgment to be no Question with men that understand the Nature of Civil Authority; for those are the Evil-doers, that violate those Laws which are necessary to the Preservation of Civil Society, as *Thieves, Murderers, Adulterers, Traytors, Plotters, Drunkards, Cheats, Vagabonds,* and the like mischievous and dissolute Persons: Men void of Virtue, Truth and Sincerity, the Foundation of all good Government, and only firm Bond of human Society. Whoever denies me this, must at the same Time say, *that Virtue is less necessary to Government than Opinion,* and that the most *Vitiated Men,* professing but *Caesar's Religion,* are the *best Subjects to Caesar's Authority,* consequently, that other Men, living never so honestly and industriously, and having else as good a Claim to Civil Protection and Preferment, shall meerly for their Dissent from that Religion (a Thing they can't help; *for Faith is the Gift of God*) be reputed the worst of Evil-doers: which is followed with exposing their Names to Obloquie, their Estates to Ruin, and their Persons to Goals, Exiles, and Abundance of other Cruelties: What is this, but to confound the *Things of Caesar* with the *Things of God;* Divine Worship with Civil Obedience; the Church with the State, and perplex human Societies with endless Debates about Religious Differ-

ences? Nay, is not this to erect new Measures to try the Members of Worldly Societies by, and give an Accession to another Power, then that which is necessary to the Constitution of Civil Government? But that which ought to deter wise Rulers from assuming and exercising such an Authority, is the Consideration of the pernicious Consequences of doing so.

For, *First*, It makes PROPERTY, which is the first and most fixt Part of *English* Government *floating* and uncertain; for it seems no Conformity to the Church, no *Property* in the State; and doubtless, the Insecurity of *Property* can be no Security to the Government: Pray think of that.

2dly, It makes me owe more to the Church than to the State; for in this Case, the Anchor I ride by, is not my *Obedience* to Laws, relating to the Preservation of *Civil Society*, but *Conformity* to certain Things belonging to the Doctrine and Discipline of the Church; so that though I may be an honest, industrious *English* man, a great Lover of my Country, and an Admirer of the Government I live under: yet if I refuse to profess the Religion that either now is, or hereafter may be imposed, be it never so false that is all one, I must neither enjoy the *Liberty* of my Person, nor the *quiet Possession* of my Estate.

3dly, This not only alters the Government, by sacrificing Mens *Properties*; for that which cannot be called a Sin against *Property*, nor an Offence to the Nature
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of *Civil Government*, if any Transgression at all, but it narrows the *Interest* and *Power* of the *Governours*: For proportionably, what Number they cut off from their Protection, they cut off from themselves and the Government, not only rendring a great Body of People *Useless*, but provoaking them to be *Dangerous*; to be sure it clogs the *Civil Magistrate* in his Administration of Government, making that necessary which is not at all necessary to him AS *CÆSAR*.

It is a Sort of *DUUMVIRATESHIP* in Power, by which the *Civil Monarchy* is broken; for as that was a Plurality of Men, *so this is a Plurality of Powers*, and to speak freely, the *Civil Power* is made to act the *Lackey*, to run of all the unpleasant Errands the forward Zeal of the other sends it upon: and the best Preferment it receives for its Pains, is to be *Informer*. *Constable* or *Goaler* to some of the best Livers, and therefore the best Subjects in the Kingdom.

Oh what greater Injustice to *Cæsar*! then to make his Government vary by such *Modes* of Religion, and him to hold his Obedience from his People, not so much by their *Conformity* to Him, as to the *Church*.

4thly, This is so far from resembling the Universal Goodness of God, who dispenses his Light, Air, Shower, and comfortable Seasons to all (and whom *Cæsar* ought alwayes to imitate) and remote from increasing the *Trade*, *Populacy* and *Wealth* of this Kingdom, that it evidently tends to the utter Ruin of Thousands of *Traders*, *Artificers* and *Husband-men* and their Families, thereby increasing the Charges, by increasing the Poor of the Nation.

5thly,

5thly, This must needs be a great *Discouragement* to Strangers, from coming in, and settling themselves amongst us, when they have Reason to apprehend, that they, and their Children after them can be no longer secured in the Enjoyment of their *Properties*, then they shall be able to prevail with their *Consciences*, to believe that the Religion which our Laws do now, or shall at any time approve and impose, is undoubtedly true; and the Way of worshipping of God, which shall at any time be by our Laws enjoyned, is, and shall be more agreeable to the Will of God then any other Way in which God is worshipped in the World.

6thly, That way of Worship we are commanded Conformity to, doth not make better Livers (that's a Demonstration) nor better *Artists*; for it cannot be thought, that going to Church, hearing *Common-Prayer*, or believing in the present *Episcopacy*, learns Men to build *Ships* or *Houses*, to make *Clothes*, *Shoes*, *Dials* or *Watches*, *Buy*, &c. *Trade* or *Commerce*, better then any that are of another Perswasion. And since these things are *Useful*, if not *Requisite* in *Civil Society*, is not prohibiting, nay, ruining such Men, because they will not come to hear *Common-Prayer*, &c. destructive of *Civil Society*; pray shew me better Subjects. If any object, *Dissenters have not alwayes been so*; the Answer is ready, do not expose them, protect them in their *Lives*, *Liberties* and *Estates*; for in this present Posture they think they can call nothing their

their own, and that all the Comforts they have in this World are hourly liable to *Forfeiture* for their *Faith, Hope* and *Practice* concerning the other World : Is not this to destroy Nature and Civil Government, when People are ruined in their Natural and Civil Capacity, not for Things relating to either, but what are of a Supernatural Import.

7thly, This deprives them of Protection that protect the Government. Dissenters have a great Share in the Trade, which is the Greatness of this Kingdom ; and they make a large Proportion of the *Taxes* that maintain the Government. And is it reasonable, or can it be *Christian*, when they pay *Tribute to Caesar*, to be preserved in an *Undisturbed Possession* of the Rest : that the Rest should be continually exposed for the peaceable Exercise of their Consciences to God ?

8thly, Neither is it a Conformity to True and Solid Religion, such as is necessary to Eternal Salvation, wherein most parties verbally agree, but for a *Modification* of Religion, *some peculiar Way* of Worship and Discipline : *All confess One God, One Christ, One Holy Ghost, and that it is indispensably requisite to live Soberly, Righteously and Godlikely in this present evil world,* yet is one prosecuting the other for his Conscience, *seizing Corn, driving away Cattel, breaking open Doors, taking away and spoiling of Goods,* in some places not leaving a *Cow to give poor Orphants Milk,* nor a *Bed to lie on ;* in other Places Houses have been swept so clean, that a *Stool* hath not been left to sit on, nor so much as working Tools to labour for Bread. To say nothing

nothing of the *Opprobrious Speeches, Bloody Blows* and *Tedious Imprisonments*, even to Death it felt, through *Nastiness* of *Dungeons*, that many Innocent People have suffered for their peaceable Conscience only.

9thly, But this Way of proceeding for Maintenance of the National Religion, is of an ill Consequence upon this account, Heaven is barred from all further *Illuminations*. Let God send what Light he pleases, it must not be received by *Cæsar's* People, without *Cæsar's* Licence; and if it happen that *Cæsar* be not presently convinced it is of God, at this rate I must either renounce my *Convictions*, and lose my *Soul* to please *Cæsar*, or profess and persevere in my *Persuasion*, and lose my *Life, Liberty* or *Estate* to please God. This hath frequently occur'd, and may again. Therefore I would entreat *Cæsar* to consider the sad Consequence of *Imposition*, and remember, both that God did never ask Man Leave to *introduce Truth*, or make further Discoveries of his Mind to the World, and that it hath been a Woful Snare to those Governments that have been drawn to employ their Power against his Work and People.

10thly, This Way of Proceedure endeavours to *Rise*, or else to punish *Sincerity*; for *Fear* or *Hopes, Frowns* or *Favours* prevail only with base Minds, Souls degenerated from true Nobleness. Every Spark of Integrity must be extinguish'd, where *Conscience* is sacrificed to *worldly Safety* and *Preferment*; so that this *Net* holds no *Temporizers*: *Honest Men* are all the Fish it catches: but one would think they should make
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but an ill Treat to such as reckon themselves *generous Men*, and what is more, *Christians* too: but that which renders the Matter more unjustifiable, is, the *Temptation* such *Severity* puts upon men, not hardy enough to suffer for *Conscience*, yet strongly perswaded they have *Truth* on their Side, to desert their *Principles*, and smother their *Convictions*, which in plain Terms is to make of Sincere Men Hypocrites, whereas it is one great End of Government, by all laudable Means to preserve Sincerity; for without it there can be no Faith or Truth in *Civil Society*. Nor is this all; for it's a *Maxim* worthy of *Caesar's* Notice, NEVER TO THINK HIM TRUE TO *CÆSAR* THAT IS FALSE TO HIS OWN CONSCIENCE; besides, raped Consciences treasure up *Revenge*, and such Persons are not likely to be longer Friends to *Caesar*, than he hath *Preferments* to allure them, or *Power* to deter them from being his most implacable Enemies.

11thly, There is not so ready a Way to *Atheism*, as this of extinguishing the Sense of Conscience for *Worldly Ends*; destroy that Internal Rule of *Faith*, *Worship* and *Practise* towards God, and the Reason of my Religion will be *Civil Injunctions*, and not *Divine Convictions*; consequently, I am to be of as many Religions as the Civil Authority shall impose, however untrue or contradictory. This *Sacred Tye* of Conscience, thus broken, farewell to all *Heavenly Obligations* in the Soul, *Scripture Authority*, and ancient *Protestant Principles*, Christ may at this Rate become what the *Jews* would have had him, and his *Apostles* be reputed Turners of the World up-side
C c down,

down, as their Enemies represented them, and the godly Martyrs of all Ages so many Self-Murderers; for they might justly be esteem'd Resisters of *Worldly Authority*, so far as that Authority concern it self with the Imposition of Religion, because they refused the Conformity commanded, even to Death.

And it may not be unworthy of *Cæsar's* Consideration, if from these Proceedings People are tempted to infer, there is nothing in Religion but *Worldly Aims* and *Ends*, because so much Power is abus'd under the Name of *Religion*, to vex and destroy Men for being of another Religion, that he hazards the best Hold and Obligation he hath to Obedience, which is Conscience: For where they are taught to Obey for *Interest*, *Duty* and *Conviction* are out of Doors. By all Means let Conscience be sacred, and *Virtue* and *Integrity* (though under dissenting Principles) cherish'd; *Charity* is more powerful than *Severity*, *Persuasion* than *Penal Laws*.

Lastly, To the Reproach of this Course with Wise Men, it hath never yet obtain'd the End desir'd; for, instead of compliance, the Difference is widened, the Sufferers are pitied by Spectators, which only helps to increase the Number of Dissenters; for whoever is in the Wrong, few think the Persecutor in the Right. This in all Ages having been the Issue of severe Prosecution of Dissenters for Matters of *Religion*; what a Cruel, Troublefom, Thankless, Successless Office is it for *Cæsar* to be employed in? May he take better Measures of his Authority and Interest, and use his Power to the Encouragement of all the *Wise* and

and *Indignum*, and Just Punishment of the *Lazy* and *Vicious* in all Perswasions; so shall the Kingdom *Flourish*, and the Government *Prosper*.

Church Power supposeth a *Church* first. It will not be improper therefore to examine, *first*, What a Scripture-New-Testament Church is; and *next*, what is the Scripture-Power belonging to such a Church: A Scripture-Church, as she may be called Visible, is a *Company or Society of People, believing, professing and practising according to the Doctrine and Example of Christ Jesus and his Apostles*, and not according to the Scribes and Pharisees, that taught for Doctrine the Traditions of men: They are such as are Meek in Heart, Lowly in Spirit (a), Chast in Life, (b) Virtuous in all Conversation, (c) full of Self-denial, (d) Long-suffering and Patient, (e) not only forgiving, (f) but loving their very Enemies; which answers Christ's own Character of himself, Religion and Kingdom, which is the most apt Distinction that ever can be given of the Nature of his Church and her Authority, viz. (g) MY KINGDOM IS NOT OF THIS WORLD. Which well connects with *Render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and unto God the things that are God's*.

It was an Answer to a very suspicious Question; for it was familiarly bruited, that he was a King, and came to possess his Kingdom, and was by some called the King of the Jews.

a Mat. 11. 20.

b 1 Pet. 3. 2.

2 Cor. 11. 2.

c Phil. 4. 8.

1 Pet. 1. 19.

d Mat. 16. 24.

e 2 Cor. 4. 6.

f Luke 6. 37.

g Joh. 18. 36.

Mat. 22. 21.

Luke 13. 2.

The Jews being then subjected to the Roman Empire, it concern'd *Pilate, Caesars Deputy*, to understand his pretensions, which upon better information John 18. 36. he found to center in this, *My Kingdom is not of this World, else would my Subjects fight for me.* As if he had said, these Reports are a meer perversion of my Peaceable and Self-denying Intentions; an Infamy invented by malicious *Scribes and Pharisees*, that they might the better prevail with *Caesar* to Sacrifice me to their hatred and revenge.

I am *Caesar's* Friend, I seek none of his Kingdoms from him, nor will I sow Sedition, plot or conspire his Ruin; no, *Let all Men render unto Caesar the Things that are Caesar's*; that's my Doctrine; for I am come to erect a Kingdom of another Nature than that of this World, to wit, a Spiritual Kingdom, Luke 17. 21. to be set up in the Heart, and Conscience is my Throne, upon that will I sit, and Titus 2. 12. rule the Children of Men in Righteousness; and whoever *lives Soberly, Righteously and Godly in this world*, shall be my good and loving Subjects, and they will certainly make no ill ones for *Caesar*, since such Virtue is the end of Government, and renders his Charge both more easie and safe then before. Had I any other Design then this, would I suffer my self to be reproached, traduced and persecuted by a conquered people? were it not more my Nature to suffer then revenge, would not their many provocations have drawn from me some Instance of another kind then the Forbearance and Forgiveness I teach? certainly were I animated by another principle then the perfection of Meekness and Divine Sweetness,

Sweetness, I should not have forbidden *Mat. 26. 52.*
Peter fighting, saying, *Put up thy Sword,*
 or endocrinated my Followers to bear Wrongs, but
 revenged all Affronts, and by Plots and other Strata-
 gems have attempted Ruin to my Enemies, and the
 acquett of worldly Empire; and no doubt but they
 would have fought for me. Nay, I am not only pati-
 ently & with Pity to Enemies) sensible of their barba-
 rous Carriage towards me for my Good Will to them
 (for their Eternal Happiness I only seek) but I fore-
 see what they further intend against me, they design
 to crucifie me, And to do it, will rather free a Mur-
 derer then save their Saviour. They will
 perform that Cruelty with all the Aggra- *Mat. 27. 20.*
 vation and Contempt they can, deriding
 me themselves, and exposing me to the *Ver. 27, & c.*
 derision of others; for they will mock my
 Divine *Kingship* with a Crown of Thorns, *Ver. 29.*
 and in my Agonies of Soul and Body for
 a Cordial, give me Gaul and Vinegar to *Ver. 48.*
 drink: But notwithstanding all this, to
 satisfie the World that my Religion is above Wrath
 and Revenge, I can forgive them.

And to secure *Caesar* and his People
 from all Fears of Imposution, whatever *Luke 23. 34.*
 Authority I have, and how many Legi- *Mat. 26. 53.*
 ons of Angels soever I might Command both to my
 Deliverance and the Enforcement of my Message up-
 on Mankind; I resolve to promote neither with
 worldly Power, for it is not of the Nature of my
 Religion and Kingdom. And as I neither assume nor
 practise any such thing my self, that am the great
 Author,

Author, Promoter and Example of this Holy Way; so have I not only never taught my Disciples to live or act otherwise, or given them a Power I refuse to use my Self; but expressly forbid them, and warn'd them in my Instructions, of exercising any the least Revenge, Imposition or Coercion towards any. This is evident in my Sermon preached upon the Mount, where I freely, publickly and with much Plainness,

not only *prohibited Revenge*, but *injoynd* Mat. 5. 44, *Love to Enemies*, making it to be a great 45, 46, 47. Token of true Discipleship to suffer Wrongs, and conquer Cruelty by Patience and Forgiveness, which is certainly a great Way off Imposition or Compulsion upon other Men.

Furthermore, when I was strongly beat for *Jerusalem*, & sent Messengers before to prepare some entertainment for me and my Company in a Luke 9. 53, Village belonging to the *Samaritans*, and 54, 55, 56. the People refused, because they apprehended I was going to *Jerusalem*; though some of my Disciples, particularly *James* and *John*, were provok'd to that Degree, that they asked me, if I were willing that they should command Fire from Heaven to destroy those *Samaritans*, as *Elijah* in another Case had done; I turned about, and rebuked them, saying, *Ye know not what Manner of Spirit ye are of; for I am not come into the World to destroy Mens Lives, but by my peaceable Doctrine, Example and Life to save them.*

At another time one of my Disciples, relating to me some Passages of their Travails, told Luk. 9. 49, 50. me of a certain Man they saw, that cast out Devils in my Name; and because he was not of their

their Company, nor followed them, said he, *we forbade him*; as if they had thereby served and pleased me; but I presently testified my Dislike of the Ignorance and Narrowness of their Zeal. and to inform them better told them, they should not have forbid him; *for he that is not against us is for us.*

My Drift is not Opinion, but Piety; they that cast out Devils, convert Sinners, and turn Men to Righteousness, are not against me, nor the Nature and Religion of my Kingdom, & therefore ought to be cherisht rather then forbid. That I might sufficiently declare and inculcate my Mind in this Matter, I did at another Time, and upon a different Occasion, preach against all Coertion and Persecution for Matters of Faith and Practice towards God, in my Parable of the Sower, as my Words manifest, which were these; *The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a Man which sowed good Seed in his Field; but while Men slept, his Enemy came, and sowed Tares among the wheat, and went his way; but when the Blade sprung up, and brought forth Fruit, there appeared the Tares also; so the Servants of the Householder came and said, didst thou not sow good Seed in thy Field? from whence then hath it Tares? he answered, an Enemy hath done this; the Servants said unto him, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up? but he said NAY, lest while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them, let both grow together till the Harvest, and in the Time of Harvest I will say to the Reapers, gather ye together first the Tares, and bind them in Bundles to burn them, but gather the Wheat into my Barn.*

Mat. 13. 24, 25,
26, 27, 28, 29, 30.

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And that I might not leave so necessary a Truth misapprehended of my dear Followers, or liable to any Mis-constructions, my Disciples, when together, desiring an Explanation, I interpreted my words thus :

He that soweth the good Seed is the Son of Man ; the Field is the world : the good Seed are the Children of the Kingdom ; but the Tares are the Children of the Wicked One ; the Enemy that sowed them is the Devil ; the Harvest is the End of the world ; and the Reapers are the Angels.

This Patience, this Long Suffering and great Forbearance belong to my Kingdom and the Subjects of it, my Doctrine speaks it, and my Example confirms it, and this can have no possible Agreement with Impostition and Persecution for Conscience. 'Tis true, I once whipt out the Prophaners of my Father's Temple ; but *I never whipt any in.* I call'd, I cry'd to every one that thirsted to come, and freely offer'd my Assistance to the Weary and Heavy Laden ; but *I never impos'd my Help, or forced any to receive me,* for I take not my Kingdom by Violence, but by Suffering. And that I might sufficiently deter my Followers from any such Thing, as I profess my self to be their Lord and Master, so have I commanded them to love one another in a more especial Manner. But if instead thereof any shall grow proud, high-minded, and beat or abuse their Fellow-Servants in my Religious Family, when I come to take an account of my Household, he shall be cut asunder, and appointed his Portion among the Unbelievers. Behold the Recompence I appoint

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to Imposing Lordly Persons, such as count others Infidels, and to make them such Believers as themselves, will exercise Violence towards them, and if they prevail not, will call for fire from Heaven to devour them, and if Heaven refuse them, will fall a Beating and Killing (and think, it may be, they do God good Service). but their Lot shall be with Unbelievers forever.

Nay, I have so effectually provided against all Mastery, that I expressly charged them, *not to be many Masters; for one was their Master*: I told them, that *the greatest amongst them was to be Servant to the rest*, not to impose upon the rest; nay, that to be great in my Kingdom, they must become as gentle and harmless as little Children, and such cannot force and punish in Matters of Religion. In fine, I strictly commanded them to love one another, as I have loved them, who am ready to lay down my Life for the Ungodly, instead of taking away Godly Men's Lives for Opinions; and this is the great Maxim of my holy Religion, *He that would be my Disciple, must not crucifie other Men, but take up his Cross and follow me, who am meek and lowly*; and such so enduring shall find Eternal Rest to their Souls; this is the Power I use, and this is the Power I give.

How much this agrees with the Language, Doctrine and Example of Jesus Christ, I shall leave them to consider, that read and believe Scripture; but some affected to present Church Power, and desiring their Ruin that conform not to her Worship and Discipline, will object, *That Christ did give his*

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Church Power to bind and loose, and bid any Person agrieved tell the Church.

I grant it; but what binding was that? with outward Chains and Fetters, in nasty Holes and Dungeons? nothing less: Or was it, that his Church had that true Discerning in her, and Power with him, that what she bound, that is condemned, or loosed, that is remitted, should stand so in God's Sight and Christ's Account.

But tell the Church; and what then? observe Christ's Extent in the Punishment of the Offender, *if the Offender will neither receive private Admonition, nor hear the Church, then* (says Christ) *let him be to thee as an Heathen, &c.* Here's not one word of Fines, whips, Stocks, Pillories, Goals, and the like Instruments of Cruelty, to punish the Heretick; for the Purport of his Words seem to be no more than this; If any Member of the Church refuse thy private Exhortation and the Church's Admonition, look upon such a Person to be obstinate, perverse, no more of you; let him take his course, thou hast done well, and the Church is clear of him.

Well, but say the Church Fighters of our Age, Did not St. Paul wish them cut off that troubled the Church in his time? Yes: But with what Sword think you? Such as Christ bid Peter put up, or the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God? Give him leave to explain his own words; *For though we walk in the Flesh, WE DO NOT WAR AFTER THE FLESH; for the WEAPONS of our Warfare are NOT CARNAL, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong Holds, casting down*
down.

Imaginations, and every high Thing that exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God, and bringing every Thought into Obedience to Christ.

What think you of this? Here are Warfares, Weapons, Oppositions and Conformity, and not only no External Force about Matters of Religion used or countenanced, but the most expresse and pathetical Exclusion and Rejection of any such Thing that could be given.

It was this great Apostle that askt that Question, *Who art thou that judgest the Servant of another?* Rom. 14. 4. *to his own Lord he standeth or falleth: but he shall stand, for God is able to make him stand.* Can we think that *Imposition* or *Persecution* is able to Answer him this Question in the Day of Judgment? Do we with Reason deny it to the *Papacy*? With what Reason then can we assume it to our selves? Let us remember who said, *Not that we have Dominion over your Faith, but are HELPERS of your Joy.* HELPERS, then not IMPOSERS nor PERSECUTORS. What Joy can there be in that to the Persecuted? but if *Paul* had no such Commission or Power over Conscience, I would fain know by what Authority more inferiour Ministers and Christians do claim and use it.

The Apostle *Peter* is of the same mind; *Feed* (says he) *the Flock of God, not by Constraint, &c. neither as being Lords over God's Heritage.* 1 Pet. 5. 2, 3. The Heritage of God is free, they have but a Lord in and of their Religion, *Christ Jesus*, and they Brethren.

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Church Power to bind and loose, and bid any Person aggrieved tell the Church.

I grant it; but what binding was that? with outward Chains and Fetters, in nasty Holes and Dungeons? nothing less: Or was it, that his Church had that true Discerning in her, and Power with him, that what she bound, that is condemned, or loosed, that is remitted, should stand so in God's Sight and Christ's Account.

But tell the Church; and what then? observe Christ's Extent in the Punishment of the Offender, *If the Offender will neither receive private Admonition, nor hear the Church, then (says Christ) let him be to thee as an Heathen, &c.* Here's not one word of *Fines, whips, Stocks, Pillories, Goals*, and the like Instruments of Cruelty, to punish the Heretick; for the Purport of his Words seem to be no more than this, If any Member of the Church refuse thy private Exhortation and the Church's Admonition, look upon such a Person to be obstinate, perverse, no more of you; let him take his course, thou hast done well, and the Church is clear of him.

Well, but say the *Church Fighters* of our Age, *Did not St. Paul wish them cut off that troubled the Church in his time?* Yes: But with what Sword think you? Such as Christ bid *Peter* put up, or the Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God? Give him leave to explain his own words, *For though we walk in the Flesh, WE DO NOT WAR AFTER THE FLESH; for the WEAPONS of our Warfare are NOT CARNAL, but mighty through God, to the pulling down of strong Holds, casting down*
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Imaginations, and every high Thing that exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God, and bringing every Thought into Obedience to Christ.

What think you of this? Here are Warfares, Weapons, Oppositions and Conformity, and not only no External Force about Matters of Religion used or countenanced, but the most expresse and paterhical Exclusion and Rejection of any such Thing that could be given.

It was this great Apostle that askt that Question, *What art thou that judgest the Servant of another?* Rom. 14.4. *to his own Lord he standeth or falleth: but he shall stand, for God is able to make him stand.* Can we think that *Imposition* or *Persecution* is able to Answer him this Question in the Day of Judgment? Do we with Reason deny it to the *Papacy*? With what Reason then can we assume it to our selves? Let us remember who said, *Not that we have Dominion over your Faith, but are HELPERS of your Joy.* HELPERS, then not IMPOSERS nor PERSECUTORS. What Joy can there be in that to the Persecuted? but if *Paul* had no such Commission or Power over Conscience, I would fain know by what Authority more inferiour Ministers and Christians do claim and use it.

The Apostle *Peter* is of the same mind; *Feed* (says he) *the Flock of God, not by Constraint, &c.* 1 Pet. 5.2.3. *neither as being Lords over God's Heritage.* The Heritage of God is free, they have but one Lord in and of their Religion, *Christ Jesus*, and they are Brethren.

The Apostle Paul says, *That where the Spirit of the Lord is there is Liberty*, but where *Coercion*, 2 Cor. 3. 7. *Fines and Goals* are there is no Liberty.

Is it to be supposed that men in these days are instructed by the Spirit of the Lord to destroy People in this World for their Faith about the other World? it can't possibly be, such mock at it? Again, says that

Apostle to the *Christians* of his time, *You are called to Liberty*, from what? *Sin and the Ceremonies of the Law*.

And shall the end of that call be the enthraling Conscience to human Edicts in Religion under the Gospel? this would make our Case worse than the *Jews*, for their Worship stood on divine Authority; and if to make men free from them Christ came, and that those very Ordinances are by the Apostle call'd *beggerly Elements*, is it reasonable that we must be subject to the Injunctions of men in the Worship of God, that are not of equal Authority?

The same Apostle again informs us, *For this end*, says he, *Christ both dyed and rose again, that HE might be Lord both of the Dead and Living*: But why dost thou judge thy Brother? then which, nothing can more expressly oppose the *Imposition, Excommunication and Persecution*, that are among us; 'tis as if he had said, Christ is Lord of *Christians*, by what Authority dost thou pretend to judge his Servants? thou also art but one of them: A Brother at most. Thou hast no Dominion over his Faith, nor hast thou Commission to be Lord over his Conscience, 'tis Christ's right, his purchase, he has paid for it. *For this end he both dyed and rose again, that he might be Lord of Dead and Living*; that he might rescue them from the Jaws of Oppression,

sion; from those that usurp their Consciences, and made a prey of their Souls. *But why dost thou judge thy Brother? If not Judge, then not Persecute, Plunder, Beat, Imprison to Death our Brethren, that must needs follow.* Come, let us look at home, and view our Actions, and see if we are not the Men.

In short, *Let every man be fully Perswaded in his own mind, and if any thing be short, God will reveal it; let us be patient.* It was not *Flesh* Rom. 14. 5.

and Blood that revealed Christ to Peter, they are Christ's words, therefore let us leave off the Consultations and Weapons of Flesh and Blood, and trust Christ with his own Kingdom; he hath said, the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it; and we cannot think that he would seek to Hell Gates to maintain it; and if it is not of this World, then not to be maintain'd by that Force and Policy, which are the Props of the Kingdoms of this World. God, the Apostle tells us, *has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the mighty.* Therefore he has not chosen the Strength and Power of this World to suppress Conscientious People, that as to humane force, are justly accounted weakest and most destitute in all Ages of defence.

I will here conclude my Scripture Proofs with this Exhortation or Injunction rather of the Apostle. *Ye are bought with a Price, not to be made the Servants of men.* The Subject here is not *human*, wherein human Ordinances are to be obeyed, that is not the Question, but *Divine*; and those that for fear or favour of men desert their Principles and betray their Consciences, they renounce their Lord, deny him that bought them, and tread his Blood, the

Price,

Price, under Foot. Ye are bought with a Price, Christ has purchast you: you are not your own, but his that bought you, therefore be not the Servants of men about God's things or Christ's Kingdom, vail to no mans Judgment, neither make mans determinations your Rule. Stand fast in the Liberty, wherewith

he has made you free, & be not entangled again into Bondage, for we are not come to that Mountain that we cannot touch, to Sinai; we

are not now to be kept under like School-Boys or Minors, that Imposition might be useful then, which is a bondage now. Moses was God's Servant, and faithful, he saw, heard and went upon the Mount for the People; but Christians are come to Mount Zion, to Jerusalem, the Mother of Peace and Freedom. Much then depended upon the Integrity of Moses, it pleased

God then to appear by those ways; but now the Law is brought home to every mans Heart, and every one shall know God for himself, from the least to the greatest. My Sheep, says Christ, hear my Voice.

And let us remember that there is no possibility of deception here, where there is no necessity of trusting. In fine, Ye are bought with a Price, be not

made the Servants of men. One is your Lord even Christ, and ye are Brethren.

But methinks I hear a stout Objection, and 'tis this : *At this rate you will overthrow all Church Discipline, all Censure of Errors, if no man or men can determin. My Answer is ready and short. No Scripture Church Discipline is hereby oppugn'd or wrakned, Let not the Sentence end in Violence upon the Conscience unconvinced, Let whoso will expound or determin, so it be according*

to true Church-discipline, which can be exercised on them only, who have willingly joyn'd themselves in that Covenant of Union, and which proceeds only to a separation from the rest, a disavowing or disowning but never to any Corporal or Pecuniary Punishment; the two Arms of Anti christ, or rather that great Beast which carries the Whore.

But let us observe what sort of Church Government the Apostle recommends, *Avoid foolish Questions, and Genealogies, and Contentions, and Striving about the Law, for they are unprofitable and vain: A Man that is an Heretick, after the first and second Admonition, reject, knowing that he that is such, is subverted and sinneth, being CONDEMNED OF HIMSELF; or Self-condemned.*

Its very remarkable; First, That this great Apostle, instead of exhorting Titus to stand upon Niceties, and sacrifice mens Natur I Comforts and Enjoyments for Opinions of Religion, injoyns him to shun Disputes about them, leaving People to their own Thoughts and Apprehensions in those Matters, as reputing the Loss of Peace in striving greater, than the Gain that could arise from such an Unity and Conformity: which excellently well coheres with another Passage of his, *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded; and if in anything ye be otherwise minded, God shall REVEAL even this unto you.* He did not say, You shall be FINED, PILLAGED, EXCOMMUNICATED & FLUNG into Prison, if ye be not of our Mind.

Phil. 3.

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ally, That, in the Apostles Definition, an Heretick is a *Self confounded* Person, one conscious to himself of Error, and Obstinacy in it; but that are not Conscientious Dissenters; for many Ten Thousands in this Nation act as they believe, and dissent from the National Religion, purely upon a Principle of Conscience to Almighty God. And with Men of any Tenderness or common Sense, their continual great Sufferings in Prison and Estate, and their Patience under them, are a Demonstration, or there can be none in the World.

Nor can their Persecutors disprove them, unless they could search Hearts, and that is a little too far for a Fallible Spirit to reach, and an Infalible One they deny. So that the Apostle makes not the Heretick to lie upon the side of Mis-believing, or not coming up to his Degree of Faith and Knowledge, but upon the side of Wilfully, Turbulently, Obstinately and Self-condemnedly maintaining inconstituting Things with the Faith, Peace and Prosperity of the Church.

Granting us then not to be Obstinate and Self-condemned Dissenters (and you cannot reasonable refuse it us) how do you prove us *Erroneous* in the other Part? All Parties plead Scripture, and that for the most opposite Principles; The Scripture, you say, cannot determine the Sense of it self; it must have an Interpreter: he must either be *Fallible* or *Infalible*; If the first, we are worse then before; for men are apt to be more confident, and yet are still upon as uncertain

certain Grounds. If the last, this must either be an *external* or an *internal* Judge; if an *external*, you know where you are without pointing; for there stands nothing between you and *Papery* in that Principle. If an *internal* Judge, either it is our selves, or the Spirit of Christ dwelling in us; not our selves, for then the Rule is the Thing ruled, which cannot be; and if it be the Spirit of Christ Jesus (and the Apostle tells us, *That unless we have the Spirit we are none of Christ's*) then is the Neck of Imposition broken, and what hast thou to do to judge me? let me stand or fall to my own Master; And upon this Foot went *Luther, Calvin, Melancton, Beza* abroad; and *Craumer, Ridley, Hooper, Jewel, Bradford, Philpot, &c.* at home, and as good Men, and constant Martyrs in Ages before them.

But suppose Conscientious Dissenters as ill Men as the Apostle describes an Heretick to be; what is the Punishment? this is close to the Point; stand it.

3dly, *A Man that is an Heretick after the first and second Admonition, reject;* that is, deny his Communion, declare he is none of you, condemn his Proceedings by a publick censure among your selves. What more can be strain'd by the fiercest Prosecutors of Men for Religion out of these words?

But will we be govern'd by the Rules of Holy Writ? have we any true Veneration for the Exhortations and Injunctions therein? then let us soberly consider, what the Apostle *Paul* advises and recommends to his beloved *Timothy* upon the present Occa-

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sion, and I dare promise an End to Contest and Persecution for Religion. *Flee Youthful Lusts; but follow Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace, with them that call on the Lord out of a pure Heart; but foolish and unlearned Questions avoid, knowing that they do gender STRIFES.* And THE SERVANT OF THE LORD MUST NOT STRIVE, but BE GENTLE UNTO ALL MEN, APT TO TEACH, PATIENT, IN MEEKNESS INSTRUCTING THOSE THAT OPPOSE *themselves, if God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledging of the Truth.*

There is such a depth of Wisdom lodged in this one Passage, that I find difficulty to express my self upon it, and yet I shall with pleasure endeavour it. Here is both Faith and Government, Religion and Duty, all that becomes us towards God, our Brethren, our Neighbours, yea, our Opposers and Enemies.

Flee Youthful Lusts: that is, avoid Sin. turn away from every Appearance of Evil, flee the Temptation as soon as thou seest it, lest it ensnare thee; but follow Righteousness, Charity and Peace; seek and love Holiness, and there will be Charity and Peace to thy self, and in thee to all men. For the Kingdom of God stands in Righteousness, and Peace, and Joy in the holy Ghost; not in Contest about Words, nor in maintaining foolish and unlearned Questions, such as reach not the Soul, nor carry any force upon our Affections, that learn not men to be better, to have more piety, virtue, goodness, but are meer Notions and Speculations,

lations, that have no influence upon holy Living, or tendency to the Regiment of our Passions. Such Questions as the Curiosity or Wantonness of Men's Wit or restless Fancy are apt to start under Pretence of Divine Truth, and Sublime Mysteries, these Niceties, Conceits and Imaginations of Men (not bottomed on the Revelation of the eternal Spirit, but humane Apprehension and Tradition) such Questions avoid, meddle not with them; but next to Youthful Lusts, flee them by all means; for they draw to Strife, to Heats, Animosities, Envy, Hatred and Persecution, which unbecome the Man of God; for says the Apostle, *He must not STRIVE, but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient* (be their Rank, Notion, Opinion or Faith what it will, he must not be fierce nor censorious, much less should he persecute or excite *Cesar* to do it for him, no such matter) *he must be apt to teach* and inform the Ignorant; and in case it succeed not, he ought not to be outrageous, or go about to whip or club it into him; he must be patient, that is, he must not think to bend things to his own Will or Time, but commit his honest Edeavours to God's Blessing, *that can raise of the Stone of the Street Children unto Abraham.* The Want of this Patience has been the Undoing of all.

But some will object, *O but it is not Ignorance, 'tis Obstinacy and Opposition:* Hardly judg'd, my Friend; but admit it were so, here's a *Recipe* for the Malady too, and that of the Apostle's prescribing. Observe the following words, *In MEEKNESS instructing those that OPPOSE themselves, if God perad-*

venture will give them Repentance, to the acknowledging of the Truth. Then not *Fining, Plundering, Beating, Stocking, Imprisoning, Banishing and Killing* even *OPPOSERS* themselves for Religion; unless there is a Way of doing these things with Gentleness, Patience and Meekness; which I confess I, and I think no Body else ever heard of.

But as the Apostle gives *Timothy* another Method then is now used by the Sons of Violence, for reclaiming Opposers, so the Reason of the Counsel makes all other Wayes unlawful; viz. *If God peradventure will give them Repentance to the acknowledgment of the Truth.* I would hereupon enter the List with a Persecutor; Is Repentance in my own Power, or is it in thine to give me? the Apostle sayes neither: 'tis God's Gift alone (*If God peradventure will give them Repentance, &c.*) since Repentance then is in the Case, and that God alone can give it, of what use are Violent Courses, which never beget Repentance? on the contrary, they have rarely fail'd to raise Prejudice and beget Hardness.

But was this the Evangelical Rule and Practice? Yes, that it was; Oh then whence comes Imposition, Force, Cruelty, Spoil of Goods, Imprisonments, Knockings, Beatings, Bruisings, Stockings, Whippings, and Spilling of Blood for Religion? What Church is that, whose Officers are so far from clothing the Naked, as that they strip the Clothed; from feeding the Hungry, that they take their Bread from them, and those poor Widows and helpless Orphans too; and so remote from visiting the Sick and Imprisoned, that they drag away their Beds from under

under them, and cast their Persons into Prison for Conscience sake? Nay, they haled away an Honest Man from a Meeting to Goal at *Reading*, (a while since) not permitting him to TAKE LEAVE of his poor Wife, newly delivered, and in a DYING Condition, though she much desired it, and liv'd but just by the Meeting house whence they took him. In fine, what are they that for no other Cause pass such *Dreadful Excommunications*, as render the Excommunicants little better then *Outlawed Persons*, *subjecting* their *Civil & Natural Rights* to their Pride, Passion, Interest or Revenge, unless they will purchase their Enjoyment at the dear rate of giving their own Consciences the Lye? For what else can be the Consequence of conforming to that I do not believe? Is not this to destroy sincere Men, and make and save Hypocrites?

Oh, that such as are concern'd would soberly consider if any Thing is so Scandalous to True Religion as FORCE. Who can think that Evidence Good that is extorted? And what a Church is that, which is made up of such Profelytes, or that employs such Means to make them? 'Tis base Coyn that needs Imposition to make it current, but true Metal passeth for its own intrinsick value. O where is that *Christian Meekness, Patience and Forbearance*? How many have been ruined, that were never exhorted, and Excommunicated before they were once admonished? This is not to serve God, but *Worldly Interest*: its quite contrary to Christ's Counsel and Doctrine: He came to save, and not to destroy Nature

ture to magnifie his Grace. You pretend to hate *J. Calvin's* unconditional Reprobation, yet practise it; If you say no, Conformity is your Condition: I answer, that its as unreasonable to require an impossibility, as cruel to damn Men for not doing it; For as you say, *his Doctrine makes God to command them to repent, that cannot repent, and yet damn them if they repent not*; So you injoyne Men to relinquish their present Faith and worship, and conform to yours, which is not in their power to do, yet damn them in a temporal respect if they refuse it; For you make such an unavoidable Dissent, punishable with the Destruction of Mens Liberties and Estates. You had better leave off valuing your selves upon the Mercy and Well-natur'dness of that Tenet of the Universal Love of God to Mankind, till you love more then your selves, and abominate that the Church of *England* should be such an Elect to the Civil Government as utterly reprobates the rest, as you pretend to detest the like Injustice in *J. Calvin's* Notion of Election and Reprobation.

And the Truth of it is, this helps on *Atheism* as much as any Enormity in the Land: when Witty Men, not willing to take Pains to examine after the Truth and Excellency of Religion, behold Men that call themselves Christ's Ministers, and the Apostles Successors and Followers, to affect and seek Government, and yet twice deny it, when they go to receive it: That some others grow Lordly, live Voluptuously, and watch after the biggest Preferments, not being excited by most Service for God, but Earthly Power and Wealth for themselves; and at the same
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Time persecuting Men of more Self-denial, for Masters of Opinion about Faith and Worthip toward God; so that *No Conformity* to this Church, *No Protection* from the State. Which among *Protestants* is so much the more unreasonable. *First*, Because they by these Courses implicitly own and assume the highest Infallibility and Perfection, and yet deny any such Thing. For it supposes that nothing is Truer, nothing Perfecter, or else they both persecute Men to embrace a Fallible, and Imperfect Religion, and with cruel Penalties provide against any thing more true or Infallible, and the greatest Injury to the World that can be: for it is a plain Endeavour to frustrate all those excellent Prophecies and gracious Promises God has given, and the holy Scriptures declare of the latter Days. But *Secondly*, It exposes you to the lash and scorn of the *Papist* unavoidably; for at this rate you, that with reason think it Ignorance and Irreligion in the *Papist* to imagin himself discharged in God's account, by believing only as the Church believes, conceive your selves at the same time justified by believing only as a few of your own Doctors, or else as the State believes. But if the Church cannot use force in Religion, for this reason, because she cannot Infallibly determin to the Conscience without convincement, much less can a few Doctors or the Civil Authority use force where they can much less judge. Unless you would make them the Civil Executioners of your displeasure that have no Civil Power to give them such Commission; and to be sure no Ecclesiastical to any Force or Violence about Religion. For the *Papist* by judging his Principles, punishes them that believes not as the Church believes,

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though against Scripture, but the *Protestant*, who teaches every one to believe the Scripture, *though against the Church*, persecutes against his own Principles. even them that in any particular so believe, as he in General teaches them to believe. This is hard, but true upon the *Protestant*; for what is plainer then that he afflicts *Those* that according to his own Doctrine believe and honour holy Scripture, but against it will receive no humane Interpretation though *Universal*? *Them*, I say, who interpret Scripture to themselves, *which by his Position none but they to themselves can Interpret*; *Them*, that use the Scripture no otherwise, by his own Doctrine, to their Edification, than he himself uses it to their punishing, and so whom his Doctrine acknowledges true Believers, his Discipline persecutes as Hereticks.

To sum up all at this time; If we must believe as *Cesar* appoints, why not then as the Church believes? But if not as either *without Convincement*, pray how can force be lawful? Let me recommend one Book to you, that of Right claims a place with you, and that is *Bishop Taylor's of Liberty of Prophecy*, never answer'd that I have heard of, and I have reason to believe never will be attempt'd; for indeed it is Unanswerable. That was the Judgment of a Bishop under Persecution, I could be glad if it might be the practice of Bishops in their power: I may say the same of *F. Tillotson's* sober and seasonable discourse before the Commons on the fifth of *November*. And the truth is, I am the more earnest with you at this time, because I find that God daily shows us he has great good will to poor *England*. O why should we drive him
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from us by our disobedience to him, and our *Severities* to one another. He has lately put a price into our hands, and continues to prove his Favours upon us; all depends up in a sincere Reformation and our perseverance therein.

To give Testimony of this; let us with our whole *Hearts turn to God and keep his holy Law*, and let us but be jealous of his Glory by *pursuing Vice and cherishing Virtue*, and we may assure our selves he will interest himself in our safety. Of this we cannot doubt, for he who has begun to do it under our Disobedience, will not desert us in our sincere Repentance. And as this is our Duty to God, without which we vainly hope for deliverance, so is there a duty we owe to one another, that is the next Requisite to our Preservation.

Let all *Affections* be avoided, *Nick-Names* forbidden, and the *oppressed Protestants* deliver'd. Receive the noble Principle of *Liberty of Conscience*, on which the Reformation rise: *For in vain do we hope to be deliver'd from Papists, till we deliver our selves from Popery.* This *Coertion upon Conscience*, and *Persecution for Religion* are that part of *Popery*, which is most justly hated and fear'd: And if we either fear or hate *Popery* for its Cruelty. *shall we practise the CRUELTY we fear or hate it for?* God forbid: this were the way to be deserted of God, and left to their Cruelty. The same Sins will ever fix the same Odium, and find the same Punishment where ever they are. If they burnt your Ancestors, don't you *strip and starve* your Brethren. Remember the many Thousands now persecuted in this Kingdom for the sake of their tender and

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very peaceable Consciences, *Husbands are unnaturally separated from their wives, and Parents from their Children, their Corn, Cattel and Househould stuff swept away, perhaps at the Instigation of some lewd and indigent Informer, or to please the malice of an ill dispos'd Neighbour.* In the mean time many, once sufficient, are expos'd to Charity, the fruits of their honest Labour and Bread of their Children being now made the Forfeiture of their Conscience.

Friends and Country men, there is deep Doctrine in this present Providence, examine it well, that you may reap the benefit of it: And among the rest, let me tell you, this is not the least part of it, that *God is shewing you Mercy, that you may shew Mercy,* and has awaken'd you at the brink of the Pit, *that you may help your Brethren out of it.* Be wise and considerate, 'twill be much your own fault if you are not happy. And truly I have no manner of scruple, but God will preserve us, if we will not cast away our selves. For our own *Sins and Folly* can only direct the hand that seeks to stab us; and shall we make it successful to our own ruin? *Let us therefore turn away from all Impiety; let the Magistracy discourage and punish it; and let us forbear, and love one another.* If we begin with God, we shall end with God, that is, *with Success;* Else be assured, we shall only inherit the Wind of our own Invention, and be deserted of him, then, when we shall most want him.

In short, reverence the present providence; though your Lives have not deserv'd it, let your Lives now be grateful; and not abuse it. Pursue your advantages throughly, but wisely; be as temperate as zealous,

lous, and to your Enemies, as generous as just : In-
sult not over ill-men for the sake of their ill Principles,
but pity their unhappiness, whilst you abhor the
cause of it ; let them see that you had rather inform
then destroy them, & take more pleasure in their Con-
version, than your own Revenge. This will be the
greatest confutation upon them, that they be taught
the Goodness of your Religion by the mildness of it,
and by its mercy, the Cruelty of their own. The
Indian *Atabaliba* rejected the *Romish Baptism*, because
of the *Spanish Tyranny*, whence it was usual with
those poor *Americans*, to desire they might not go to
Heaven if the *Spaniards* went thither. I know
there be little Arts used to prevent *Protestant Union*,
and that in a *Protestant Guile*, and 'tis a *Trick*, not
of yesterday, to put one Party of *Protestants* upon de-
vouring four or five, that both the *Protestant Church*
may have the Odium of *Eating or Devouring* her own
Children, & that another Interest behind the *Hangings* may
find the more easie and creditable access to the Chair :
'Tis the Men of this Strain, though under disguise, that
now seek to distract you, and to effect it the better,
old Stories must be had up, *Acts of Olivion violated*,
the dead disturb'd, *their Tombs ris'd* and *they ha'd out*
of their Graves to receive a new Sentence ; That Con-
demning the *Living* of that interest by the *Dead*, they
might be deserted of those, that to say we cannot be
safe without them.

If any thing Sober and Judicious be propos'd for
allaying Asperities, accomodating Differences, and
securing to Prince and People a just and legal Union of
Interest as our Government requires, we must pre-
sently be told of 41. and 42. as if there were a sort of

Alcromancy in the numbers, or that the naming of those *Figures* (long since made *Cyphers* by an *Art of Oblivion*) hath power enough to *lay* the active and generous *Spirits* of our times; but they will find themselves mistaken in their *black Art*, and that things as well as times are chang'd; the *Mask* is off, and he that runs may read.

Men in their Pleas and Endeavours for Truth, Justice and Sincere Religion will not be over-born or stagger'd by such stale and trifling Reflections, rarely used of late but to palliate wretched Designs, or discredit good ones, with men of weak Judgments, though perhaps of loyal Principles.

I beseech you, let us not be *unskilful* in these Tricks; that we may not be mistaken or abused by them; I cannot tell a *time* in which the Minds of all sorts of *Protestants* have been so powerfully and unanimously engag'd to endeavour a good Understanding between the *King* and *People*; And as I am sure it was never more needed, so let me say no Age hath put a richer Price into the Hands of Men, or yielded a fairer Occasion to fix an happy and lasting Union upon: in order to which let me prevail with you, that we may study to improve this great Principle as the necessary means to it, viz. *That God's Providence and our own Constitution have made the Interest of Prince and People ONE; and that their Peace and Greatness lie in a most industrious and impartial Prosecution of it.*

Those that teach other Doctrine, as that the *Prince* hath an *Interest* apart from the Good and Safety of the *People*, are the sole men that get by it, and therefore find themselves oblig'd to *study* their *mis-understanding*,

ing because they only are disappointed and infecured by their *Union*.

Experience truly tells us, that such Persons have another Interest than that which leads to a common Good, and are often but too *artificial* in interesting *Princes* in the success of it; but prudent and generous *Princes* have ever seen that it is neither safe nor just; and that no Kingdom can be govern'd with true Glory and Success, but there *where the Interest of the Governour is one with that of the Governed*, and where there is the strictest Care to steer all Transactions of State by the *Fundamentals, or first and great Principles of their own Constitution*, especially since swerving from them hath alwayes made way for Confusion and Misery in Government. Our own Stories are almost every where vext by this Neglect.

To Conclude, and sum up the whole Discourse; If you will both cure present, and prevent future Grievances, it will greatly behove us to take a most deliberate and unbiass'd View of the present state of Things, with their proper Causes and Tendencies. Let us confront our Ecclesiastical Matters with the plain Text and Letter of Holy Scripture; this is *PROTESTANT*: and let us compare our civil Transactions with the antient Laws and Statutes of the Realm; this is *ENGLISH*. And I do humbly and heartily beseech Almighty God, that he would so dispose the Hearts of *Prince and People*, as that now Foundations may be laid for a Just and Lasting Tranquility to these Nations.

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A N APPENDIX

OF the CAUSES of PERSECUTION

I Impute all Persecution for Religion to these Seven insuing Causes, though properly speaking, there is but one Original Cause of this *Evil*, and that is the *Devil*, as there is but one Original Cause of *Good*, and that is *God*.

The first Cause of Persecution is this, *That the Authors and Users of it have little or no Religion at Heart*, they are not subject to the ground and first Cause of true Religion in their own Souls: For it is the part of true Religion to *humble the Mind, break the Heart, and soften the Affection*: *To him, O God! wilt thou have regard*, said one of Old, *who is of a broken Heart, and a contrite Spirit, and that trembles at thy word*; not one that *breaks Pates and plunders Goods for Religion*. Blessed are they that Mourn, said Christ, they shall be comforted; *not those that sell Joseph, and make Merit*. Blessed are the poor in Spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of God; *those that are low in their own Eyes*; not such

such as devour and damn all but themselves. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth; *such as are gentle and ready to help, and not Tyrannize over Neighbours.* Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy; *what then shall become of those that are Cruel, under pretence of doing it for Gods sake.* Blessed are the Peace-makers; for they shall be called the Children of God; *then Disturbers and Destroyers of their peaceable Neighbours shall not be called so.* Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after Righteousness, for they shall be filled; *but not those that hunger and thirst after our Corn and Cattel, Houses and Land for Conscience sake.* And Blessed are you, says Christ, when Men shall Revile and Persecute you, &c. *then not those that Revile and Persecute others, and those Sober and Harmless: not one Blessing to this Conscience-bunting Doctrine and Practice, that devour the Widow and Orphant for Religion.* Were men inwardly and truly Religious, they would have that low Opinion of themselves, that tender regard to mankind, that awe of Almighty God, that none of these froward Passions would have any sway with them. But the mischief is, *unmortified Passions pretend to Religion,* a Proud, Impatient, Arrogant mind would promote it, then Which, nothing of Man is more remote from it, and mistaking the Nature of Christ's peaceable Religion, *which, if the Apostle James say true, is to visit the Fatherless and Widow, and keep our selves unspotted of the World.* They turn Widow and Fatherless out of House and Home, and spot themselves with the Cruelty and Injustice of usurping their poor patrimony, the Bread of their Lives, and Sustainance of their Natures; such men

as these are devoid of natural Affection, their Religion has no Bowels, or they are without Mercy in the Profession of it; which is the quite contrary to true Religion, that *makes us love Enemies, do good to them that hate us, and kindly entreat those that despightfully use us*: and so much stronger, in Souls truly Religious, is the power of Love to Mankind then any Self-revenging Passion, that from an humble and serious reflection upon the Mercies and Goodness of God to them, they do not only suppress any rising of Heart against their Persecutors (much more against peaceable Dissenters) but with much softness & charity commiserate their Ignorance and Fury; offering to inform them, and praying that they may be forgiven. This is to be Religious, and therefore those that Persecute for Religion are *Irreligious*.

2dly, The next Cause of Persecution, is the gross but general Mistake which People are under concerning the Nature of the Church & Kingdom of Christ, for the lamentable Worldliness of mens minds hath put them upon those Carnal Constructions, which have made way for all the external Coertion and Violence used by bad, and suffer'd by good Men on the score of Religion from the beginning. And no wonder if ordinary Persons tumble upon this Construction, when the Disciples of Jesus shew'd themselves so ill read in the Mysteries of his Kingdom, that after all the Intimacy they had had with him, they refrain'd not to ask, *when shall the Kingdom be restored to Israel*. They look't abroad, had a Worldly Idea in their minds; few, like they waited for external Deliverance from the

the Power of the *Romans*, rather than an Internal Salvation from the Dominion of *Satan*, and interpreted that to Worldly loss and freedom, which did relate to the loss and Redemption of the Soul; but Jesus taught them better things; yet so, as not to deny or flatly discourage and rebuke them; that (though true) might have been more then they could have born, therefore he winds off with them upon the Time and the Season of the thing, knowing that the Time was at hand, that they should be better taught and satisfied of the nature of his Kingdom, unto which he referred them. *When the Spirit* John 16.
of Truth comes, it shall lead you into all Truth,
&c.

That the Kingdom of Christ is not of this World, has been before observed, and the Reason is so great, that all men of common Sense must allow it upon Christ's Principle; for says he, *then would my Servants fight for me*; truly implying, that because the Kingdoms of this World are evidently set up and maintained by Worldly Force, and that he will have no Worldly Force used in the Business of his Kingdom, therefore it is not of this World. Consequently, those that attempt to set up his Kingdom by Worldly Force, or make that their Pretence to use it, are none of his Servants; they are truly bad Men of this World; such as seek an Earthly, and not an Heavenly Kingdom; themselves, and not Christ Jesus. Where by the way let me observe, That though the *Jews*, to engage *Pilate* the more easily to their side, impeach't *Christ* of being an Enemy to *Caesar*, they were Enemies, and *His Friends* to

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Caesar:

Caesar: for he came to reform the Lives of Men, to make them better Subjects, to obey *Caesar*, not for Fear, but for *Conscience sake* (so would *Caesar's* Province have been easy and safe.) But the Jews would have had him *Caesar's* Enemy, one that should have forcibly rescued them from *Caesar's* Power; they waited for a Captain General to begin the Revolt, and wish an high Mandariver bear and captive *Caesar*, as he had done them: and 'tis more than probable, that his Appearance being to another End, they therefore rejected him, their Heart being set upon this.

But to return: *Christ* told his Disciples, that he had chosen them out of the World; how? not to converse or live bodily in it? no such matter: but he had chosen or singled them from the Nature, Spirit, Glory, Policy and Pomp of this World. How Persons so qualified can make a Worldly Church or Kingdom, unless they desert *Christ's* Doctrine, is past my Skill to tell. So that the Capacity that Christians stand in to *Christ* is Spiritual, and not Worldly or Carnal, and therefore not Carnal or Worldly, but Spiritual Methods and Weapons only are to be used to inform or reclaim such as are Ignorant or Disobedient. And if we will give Ancient Story credit, we shall find that Worldly Weapons were never employed by the Christian Church till she became Worldly, and so ceased to be truly Christian.

But why should I say the Church (the most abused word in the World) her Leaders have taught her to err, and that of believing as the Church believes, is so far from being true in point of Faith as well as Reason, that the Church herself has never believed as she

The Clergy (that is, the *Priests*) believed, since that sort of Men have practised Distinction from and Superiority upon the Laity. He that will peruse the Ecclesiastical Story delivered us by *Eusebius Pamphili*, *Socrates Scholasticus*, *Eudogrus*, *Ruffinus*, *Sozomen*, &c. will find but too many and sad Instances of the Truth of this.

In short, Peoples apprehending the Church and Kingdom of Christ to be Visible and Worldly, like other Societies and Government, have thought it not only to be Lawful but Necessary to use the Arts and Force of this World to support that Church and Kingdom, especially since this Interest of Religion hath been embodied with that of the *Civil Magistrate*; for from that time he hath been made *Custos utriusq; tabule*, and such as offend, though about Church Matters, have been reputed Transgressors against the *State*, and consequently the *State* interested in punishing the Offence. Whereas had *Christians* remain'd in their primitive Simplicity and Purity, in the Self-denying, Patient and Suffering Doctrine of *Christ*, Christianity had stood in Holy Living, not in Worldly Regiment; and its Compulsion would have been Love; its Arms, Reason and Truth, and its utmost Rigour, even to obstinate Enemies or Apostates, but Renouncing of their Communion, and that not till much Forbearance had been used to them.

To sum up all; The Kingdoms of this World, stand in outward Bodily and Civil Matters, and here, the Laws and Power of Men reach and are effectual. But the Kingdom and Church of Christ, that is chosen out of the World, stands not in Bodily Exercise

(which the Apostle says profits little) nor in Times nor Places, but in Faith and that Worship which Christ tells us is in Spirit and in Truth; to this no Worldly Compulsion can bring or force men, 'tis only the Power of that King of Righteousness, whose Kingdom is in the Minds and Souls of the Just, and he rules by the Law of his own free Spirit, which like the Wind, *Bloweth where it listeth*: And as without this Spirit of Regeneration no man can be made a Member of Christs Church or Kingdom, so neither is it in the Power of Man to command or give it, and consequently all Worldly force employ'd to make men Members of Christs Church and Kingdom is unnatural and ineffectual. I could be very large upon this point, for 'tis very fruitful, and so much the cause of Persecution, that if there were never another to be assign'd, this were enough; for upon due consideration it must needs meet with every mans Judgment and Experience. I will here add the sense of memorable *Hales of Eaton* upon this Subject.

'When our Saviour in the *Acts* after his Resurrection was Discourſing to his Disciples concerning

J. Hales *Golden Essays*, 'the Kingdom of God, they
in his Sermon upon *John* 'presently brake forth into this
18 ver. 36. pag. 153, 'Question, *Wilt thou now re-*
154, 155. 'store the Kingdom unto Israel?

'Certainly this Question be-
'trays their Ignorance; their thoughts still ran upon
'a Kingdom like unto the Kingdoms of the World,
'notwithstanding they had so long and so often heard
'our Saviour to the contrary: Our Saviour therefore
'shortly

' Shortly takes them up, *Noviss vestrum*, your Que-
 ' stion is nothing to the purpose, the Kingdom that
 ' I have spoken of is another manner of Kingdom,
 ' then you conceive. Sixteen hundred Years, *et quod*
 ' *excurret*, hath the Gospel been preached unto the
 ' World, and is this Rain spunged out yet? I doubt
 ' it not. Whence arise those noyel and late Disputes, *de*
 ' *notis Ecclesie*, of the notes and *visibilibus* of the Church.
 ' Is it not from hence they of *Rome* take the World
 ' and the Church to be like *Mercury* and *Sophy* in *Plauti*
 ' *ius* his Comedies, so like one another, that one of
 ' them must wear a Toy in his Cap, that so the Spe-
 ' ciators may distinguish them; whence comes it that
 ' they stand so much upon *State* and *Ceremony* in the
 ' Church? Is it not from hence, that they think the
 ' Church must come in like *Agrippa* and *Bernice* in the
 ' *Acts* *multa cum pompa et castris*, as *St. Luke* speaks, with a
 ' great deal of *Pomp*, and *Train*, and *Shew*, and *Va-*
 ' *nity*; and that the Service of God doth necessarily
 ' require this noise and tumult of outward *State* and
 ' *Ceremony*? Whence comes it, that we are at our
 ' Wits ends, when we see *Persecution*, and *Sword*,
 ' and *Fire* to rage against the true Professors of the
 ' Gospel? Is it not because, as these brings *Ruin* and
 ' *Desolation* upon the Kingdoms of the World;
 ' so we suppose they work no other effect in the King-
 ' dom of *Christ*? all these Conceits, and many more
 ' of the like Nature, spring out of so other Foun-
 ' tain then that old inveterate Error which is so hard-
 ' ly wiped out of our Hearts; That the *State* of the
 ' Church and Kingdom of *Christ* doth hold some *pro-*
 ' portion, some likeness with the *State* and managing
 ' of

of *temporal Kingdoms*: Wherefore to pluck out of our Hearts, *opinionem tam infirmam, tam vetustam, et* Conceit so antient, so deeply rooted in us, our Saviour spake most excellently, most pertinently, and most fully, when he tells us, that his *Church*, that his *Kingdom is not of this world*.

In which Word of his, there is contained the true art of discovering and knowing the true Nature and Essence of the *Church*. For as they which make *Statues*, cut and pare away all Superfluities of the matter upon which they work; so our Saviour, to shew us the true proportion and feat are of the *Church*, prunes away the *World* and all superfluous Exerescencies and sends her to be seen, as he did our first Parents in Paradise, stark naked: As those *Elders* in the *Apocryphal* Story of *Susanna*, when they would see her Beauty, commanded to take off her Mask: So he that longs to see the Beauty of the *Church*, must pull off that Mask of the *World* and outward shew. For as *Juda* in the Book of *Genesis*, when *Thamar* sat Vail'd by the Way-side knew not his Daughter from an Where: So whilst the *Church*, the Daughter and Spouse of Christ sits vail'd with the *world*, and *Pomp* and *Shew*, it will be an hard matter to discern her from an *Harlot*. But yet further, to make the difference betwixt these Kingdoms the more plainly to appear, and so better to fix in your Memories, I will briefly touch some of these Heads, in which they are most notoriously differenced.

The first Head wherein the Difference is seen, are the Persons and Subjects of this Kingdom: For as the *Kingdom of Christ is not of this world*, so the Subjects

'jects of this Kingdom are Men of another world, and
 'not of this. Every one of us bears a double Per-
 'son, and accordingly is the Subject of a double King-
 'dom: The Holy Ghost by the Psalmist divides
 'Heaven and Earth betwixt God and Man, and tells
 'us, as for God, *He is in Heaven, but the Earth has he*
 '*given to the Children of Men*: So hath the same Spi-
 'rit by the Apostle St. Paul divided every one of our
 'Persons into Heaven and Earth, into an outward
 'and earthly Man, and into an inward and heavenly
 'Man: This Earth, that is, this Body of Clay hath
 'he given to the Sons of Men, to the Princes under
 'whose Government we live; but Heaven, that is,
 'the inward and spiritual Man, hath he reserved unto
 'himself: They can restrain the outward Man, and
 'moderate our outward Actions by Edicts and Laws;
 'they can tye our Hands and our Tongues; — *Ita se*
 '*quasi in aula Aulicus*: Thus far they can go, and when
 'they are gone thus far, they can go no farther: But
 'to rule the inward Man in our Hearts and Souls, to
 'set up an Imperial Throne in our Understandings
 'and Wills, this part of our Government belongs
 'to God and to Christ: These are the Subjects, this
 'the Government of his Kingdom; Men may be
 'Kings of Earth and Bodies, but Christ alone is the
 'King of Spirits and Souls. Yet this inward Govern-
 'ment hath influence upon our outward Actions; For
 'the Authority of Kings over our outward Man is
 'not so absolute, but that it suffers a great Restraint;
 'it must stretch no farther then the Prince of our in-
 'ward Man pleases: for if secular Princes stretch out
 the

' the Skirts of their Authority to command ought
 ' by which our Souls are prejudiced the King of Souls
 ' hath in this case given us a greater Command, *That*
 ' *we rather Obey God then Men.*

3dly, A third great Cause of Persecution for Religion is this, *that men make too many things necessary to be believed to Salvation and Communion.* Persecution entered with *Creed making*; for it so falls out, that those who distinguish the Tree in the bulk, cannot with the like ease discern every Branch or Leaf that grows upon it; and to run out the necessary Articles of Faith to every good or true thing that the Wit of Man may deduce from the Text, and so too, as that I ought to have a distinct *Idea*, or *Apprehension* of every one of them, and must run them over in my mind as a Child would con a Lesson by Heart, and that as the Creed of which I must not miss a tittle upon my Salvation; this I think to be a Temptation upon men to fall into Dispute and Controversie, and then we are taught, by long Experience, that he that has most Power, will oppress his Opinion that is weaker, whence comes Persecution, this puts Unity & Peace too much upon the Hazard. *Mary's Choice there-*

fore was not of many things, but the one
 Luke 10. *thing necessary*, as Christ terms it, the Lord
 42. *of the true Divinity*; and pray what was
 this one needful thing, *but Christ Jesus himself, and*
her Faith, Love and Obedience in and to him: here is
 no perplext Creed to subscribe, no *Systeme* of Divinity
 to charge the Head with, this *One Needful thing* was
Mary's

Mary's Choice & Blessing; may it be ours, and I should hope a quick End to Controversies, and consequently to Persecutions.

4thly, Another Cause of Persecution, is The Prejudice of Education, and that Byass Tradition gives to those men, who have not made their Religion the Religion of their Judgment: For such will forbid all the Inquiry, which might question the Weakness or Falshood of their Religion, and had rather be deceiv'd in an honorable Decent, then be so uncivil to the memory of his Ancestors, as to seek the Truth which sound must reprove the Ignorance of their Ages; of this (the vainest of all Honours) they are extremely careful, and at the very mention of any thing, to them new (though as old as Truth, and older then this World) are easily urg'd into a Tempest, and are not appeased but by a Sacrifice. This Ignorance and want of Inquiry helps on Persecution.

5thly, Another Reason and that no small one, is Self-love and Impatience of Men under contradiction, be it out of Ignorance, that they are angry with what they cannot refuse, or out of private Interest, it matters not; their Opinion must reign alone, they are tenacious of their own sense and can't indure to have it question'd, be there never so much reason for it; Men of these Passions are yet to learn they are Ignorant of Religion, by the want they have of Mortification, such Persons can easily let go their hold on Charity, to lay Violent hands upon their Opposers; if they have power, they rarely fail to use it so; not
H h remembering,

remembering; that when they absolv'd themselves from the tye of Love, Meekness and Patience, they have abandon'd true Religion, and contend not for the Faith once deliver'd to the Saints, (which stood therein) but for meer Words.

It is here proud Flesh and a capricious Head that disputes for Religion, and not an humble Heart, and a divine frame of Spirit. *Men that are angry for God, Passionate for Christ, that call Names for Religion, and sling Stones and Persecute for Faith,* may tell us they are *Christians* if they will, but no body would know them to be such by their Fruits, to be sure they are no *Christians* of Christ's making.

I would to God that the Disputants of our time did but coolly weigh the Irreligiousness of their own *Heats* for Religion, and see if what they contend for will quit the Cost, will countervail the Charge of departing from Charity and making a Sacrifice of Peace to gain their point; upon so seasonable a reflection I am confident they would find that they rather show their love to Opinion then Truth, and seek Victory more then Concord.

Could men be contented as he, whom they call their Lord, was, *to declare their Message, and not strive for Proselytes, nor vex for Conquest,* they would recommend all to the Conscience, and if it must be so, patiently endure Contradiction too, and so lay their Religion, as he did his, not in Violence but Suffering; But I must freely profess, and in duty and Conscience I do it, that I cannot call that Religion, which is introduced against the Laws of Love, Meekness & Friendship: Superstition, Interest or Faction I may.

There

There is a Zeal without Knowledge, that is *Superstition*; there is a Zeal against Knowledge, that is *Interest* or *Faction* (the true *Heretic*;) there is a Zeal with Knowledge, that is *Religion*; therefore blind obedience may be superstition, it can't be Religion: and if you will view the Countries of Cruelty, you shall find them Superstitious rather then Religious. Religion is gentle, it makes men better, more Friendly, Loving and Patient then before. And the success, which followed *Christianity* whilst the antient Professors of it betook themselves to no other defence, plainly proves both the force of those passive Arguments above all corporal Punishments, & that we must never hope for the same Prosperity *till we fall into the same Methods.* Are men impatient of having their conceits own'd? they are then most to be suspected. Error and Superstition, like crackt Titles, *only fear to be toucht, and run for Authority and number.* Truth is plain and stedfast, without Arts or Tricks, will you receive her, well: if not, there is no compulsion. But pray tell me, what is that desired Uniformity that has not Unity? and that Unity, which has not Love, Meekness and Patience in it? I beseech you hear me, for those men depart from the Spirit of *Christianity*, that seek with Anger and Frowardness to promote it. Let us not put so miserable a Cheat upon our selves, nor affront upon *Christianity* as to think, *That a most gentle and patient Religion can be advanc'd by most ungentle and impatient ways.* I should sooner submit to an humble opposition then to the greatest Zealot in the World, and sooner deliver my self up to him that would modestly drop a controverted Truth, then to such as seek

tempestuously to carry it, for even Error, bashfully and patiently defended endangers Truth in the management of impudent & hasty Zeal; and gives to it that Lustre which only good Eyes can see from Gold. Alas! 'tis for want of Considering, that men don't see, that to disorder the mind in Controversie is a greater mischief then to carry the point can be a benefit; in that it is not to be Religious to apprehend rightly, but to do well; the latter can scarcely be without the former, but the former often is without the latter, which brings me to my sixth Cause of Persecution.

6^{thly}. Another, and that no small cause of *Persecution* is a misapprehension of the word *Religion*. For when once the Ignorance or Prejudice of men has perswaded them to lay more weight upon their own *Opinion* or *Dissent* of their Neighbours then in truth the thing will bear, to excuse their Zeal or justify their Spleen, they presently heighten the difference to a *new Religion*; whence we so frequently hear of such reflections as these, *new Gospels and Faiths, upstart Religions and Lights*, and with the like *Scare-crows* amuse the Vulgar and render their own design of ruining honest men the more practicable. But I would obviate this mischief; for a *new Religion* has a *new Foundation*, and Consequently where there is the *same Foundation*, there cannot be a *new Religion*. Now the Foundation of the *Christian Religion* is *Christ*, and that only is another Religion then the *Christian*, which professes another Foundation, or corruptly adds to that Foundation by adding other Mediators, and introducing a new way of Remission of Sin: Which cannot be said

of

of the several sorts of *Protestants*? therefore for *Protestants* to reproach each other with *new Religions and Gospels*, and by their Indecent and Unchristian behaviour to enslave their own Reckoning, and draw into more discord, is a Sin against God, an Injury to the common Cause of *Protestancy*, and to the Security of the Civil Interest of that Country where the Inhabitants are of that Religion, as well as a real Injustice to one another; for *Protestants* don't only agree in the *same Fundamentals of Christianity*, but of *Protestancy* too, that is, in the reasons of Separation from *Rome*, which indeed is *Christianity*. Let not every circumstantial difference or Variety of *Cult* be *Nick-named a new Religion*, neither suffer so ill an use to be made of such Dissents as to carry them beyond their true bounds, for the meaning of those Arts of ill men, is to set the People further off from one another than they really are; and to aggravate Differences in Judgment, to Contrariety in affection, and when they have once inflam'd them to Variance and Strife, nothing can hinder Persecution but want of Power, which being never wanted by the strongest side, the weakest, though truest, is oppress'd, not by *Argument*, but *worldly Weapons*.

The *seventh and last Cause* I shall now assign for Persecution is this, *That Holy living is become no test among us, unless against the liver*. The Tree was once known by its Fruits, 'tis not so now; the better Liver, the more dangerous, *if not a Conformist*: this has made way for Persecution. There was a time, when

when Virtue was Venerable and good Men admired, that's derided, and Opinion carries it.

He that can persuade his Conscience to comply with the times, *be he Vicious, Knavish, Cowardly, any thing*; he is protected, perhaps prefer'd. A Man of Wisdom, Sobriety and Ability to serve his King and Country, *if a Dissenter*, must be blown upon for a *Phanatick*, a man of Faction, of disloyal Principles, and what not.

Rewards and Punishments are the Magistrates duty and the Governments interest and support. Rewards are due to Virtue, Punishments to Vice. Let us not mistake nor miscall things; let Virtue be what it always was in Government, *good Manners, sober Living*; and Vice, *ill Manners and ill Living*. Reduce all to this: let *such good Men have the Smiles and Rewards*, and *such ill Men the Frowns and Punishments of the Government*; this ends Persecution, and lays Opinion to sleep. Ill men will make no more advantages by *such* Conformity, nor good men no more suffer for want of it.

In short, As that Religious Society deserves not the Protection of the Civil, which is inconsistent with the Safety of it; so those Societies of Christians, that are not only not Destructive of the Civil Government, but Lovers of it, ought by the Civil Government to be secured from Ruin.

God Almighty open our Understandings, & pour out the Spirit of thorow Reformation upon us, that we may be all Conscientiously Dispos'd to seek and pursue

pursue those things which make for Love, Peace and Godliness, that it may be well with us both here and forever.

For yet a little while, and the Wicked shall not be: yea, thou shalt diligently consider his place, and it shall not be; but the Meek shall inherit the Earth, and shall delight themselves in abundance of Peace. The Wicked PLOTTETH against the Just, and gnasheth upon him with his Teeth; the Lord shall laugh at him; for he seeth that his Day is coming, Psal. 37. 10, 11, 12, 13.

The Judgment of King James & King Charles the first about Persecution for Religion.

VWE find it asserted by King James in his Speech to the Parliament in the year 1609. who said, *That it is a pure Rule in Divinity, That God never loves to plant his Church with Violence and Blood; and furthermore said, It was usually the Condition of Christians to be Persecuted, but not to Persecute.*

And we find the same things in substance asserted again by his Son, King Charles the first, in his Book known by the Name ΕΙΚΟΝ ΒΑΣΙΛΙΚΗ, printed for R. Royston, as followeth.

Page 67. In his Prayer to God he said, *Thou seest how much Cruelty amongst Christians is acted under the colour of Religion; as if we cou'd not be Christians, unless we Crucifie one another.*

Page 28. *Make them at length seriously consider, that nothing Violent and Injurious, can be Religion.*

Page 70. *Nor is it so proper to hew out Religious Reformatiōns by the Sword, as to polish them by fair and equal Disputations, among those that are most concerned in the Differences, whom, not Force but Reason ought to convince.*

Sure in Matters of Religion, those Truths gain most upon mens Judgments and Consciences, which are least urged with secular Violence, which weakens Truth with Prejudices.

Page.

Page. 115. *It being an Office not only of Humanity, rather to use Reason than Force, but also of Christianity to seek Peace and ensue it.*

Some Words of Advice from King Charles the first, to the then Prince of Wales, now King of England, &c.

Page. 165. *My Counsel and Charge to you is, That you seriously consider the former Real or Objected Miscarriages, which might occasion my Troubles, that you may avoid them, &c.*

Beware of Exasperating any Faction, by the Crookedness and Asperity of some mens Passions, Humours and private Opinions, employed by you, grounded only upon Differences in lesser matters, which are but the Skirts and Suburbs of Religion, wherein a charitable Commivance and Christian Toleration, often dissipates their Strength, when rougher Opposition fortifies, and puts the Despised and Oppressed Party into such Combinations, as may most enable them to get a full Revenge on those they count their Persecutors.

Page. 166. *Take heed that Outward Circumstances and Formalities of Religion devour not all.*

Difficulties in printing have occasion'd some Faults, which pray Excuse and Attend.

Page 8. line 18. after *Quality* add in saying. p. 14. l. 10. was r. in. p. 16. l. 5. these r. those. l. 27. Low r. Lowr. p. 27. l. 5. with of. p. 29. l. 31 of dele. p. 33. l. 1. both r have. p. 39. l. 10. r. Salomon p. 51. l. 9. r. ub. p. 56. l. 11. this r. thy. p. 61. l. 22. the dele. l. 31. and if not. p. 78. l. 20. of your. p. 79. l. 1. as dele. l. 26. r. discard all &c. p. 82. l. 3. whom r. which. p. 83. l. 1. r. mutable state. p. 103. l. 24. in r. on. p. 111. l. 1. r. believeth. p. 118. l. 2. preaching r. speaking. p. 120. l. 32. their r. your. p. 131. l. 8. r. that impossible. p. 133. l. 24. r. Ages Band. p. 134. l. 31. r. have been. p. 137. l. 6. the r. she. p. 138. l. 27. r. she. p. 139. l. 9. r. therefore. l. 16. read imbecil. l. 23. r. Perfection. p. 140. l. 28. r. reject. p. 143. l. 14. r. for peace. p. 153. l. 32. civil r. personal. p. 156. l. 13. ever r. over. l. 30. r. hurt. p. 178. l. 17. Pope r. Judge. p. 183. l. 11. the dele. l. 18. r. and it is. p. 184. l. 26. let us. p. 185. l. 14. those r. three. p. 195. l. 22. intruded r. intended. p. 202. l. 4. r. concerned. p. 208. l. 27. r. Presbyter. p. 212. l. 16. r. it is reasonable. p. 219. l. 25. r. undying. p. 222. l. 28. receive. p. 227. l. 26. we r. true. p. 229. l. 29. r. laid. p. 231. l. 29. and dele. p. 235. l. 10. r. Governments. l. 13. this r. it. p. 241. l. 11. his r. their. l. 22. refuse r. refuse. p. 244. l. 32. imprudent. p. 245. l. 4. enslave r. encrease.

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